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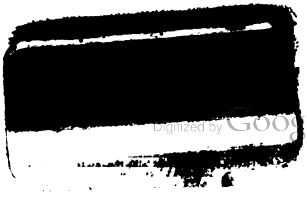

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CHAPTERS

IN THE

HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

1509 - 16[illegible]3

FROM 1509 TO THE

CLOSE OF THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

BY

ELLEN CROFTS

LECTURER AT NEWNHAM COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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PREFACE.

In these Chapters, which are founded on Lectures given at Newnham College, I have tried to give a connected view of the so-called Elizabethan period.

I hope that they may be a stimulus to the study of the works of the writers of this time, and also that they may serve as connecting links between the many excellent works both of criticism and research which bear on the period, and to which I have been so largely indebted.

Newnham College,
October 1883.

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Milton
Hooker
John Donne

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ERRATA.

Page 111, line 13, *for* Stgyian *read* Stygian.
,, 139, ,, 15, *for* accorded *read* recorded.
,, 139, ,, 41, *for* chain *read* chair.

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

DURING THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTION.

THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY.

DANTE, *b.* 1265, *d.* 1321; PETRARCA, Francesco, *b.* 1304, *d.* 1374; BOCCACCIO, Giovanni, *b.* 1313, *d.* 1375.

THERE was a deep and spiritual significance for the mediæval mind in the story of Faust. In order to enjoy the world, to taste of its experience, Faust sells his soul to the devil; he gives way to those cravings, the satisfaction of which, according to mediæval belief, must make him the victim of the powers of evil. The legend, the story of his desires, of his temptation and his fall, is truly typical of the struggle that went on in the minds that hovered on the brink of that great movement of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,—a movement which is often too exclusively, too narrowly, called the Renaissance, embracing as it does that twofold revolt against the authority of the Church and the intellectual despotism of the Schoolmen, the latter specially aided and characterised by the revival of the classics. The later mediæval mind had in it the germs of revolt against the narrowed life of the Middle Ages; against the ascetic theory that earthly life was but a pilgrimage, that here on earth there was nothing but misery, suffering, and sacrifice in order to reach the heavenly life and gain the heavenly crown, the one object of human effort; that the cravings for earthly knowledge, earthly enjoyment, were a deadly sin. But for long the ascetic theory remained powerful, and the legend told the story of the man, who, seeking to satisfy his earthly desires, was eternally lost.

Of the great movement, of which the legend contains an early indication, there can be no adequate comprehension, unless

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we accept that view which regards it as a necessary phase, and one of the most important phases, in the growth of the social organism; we must look upon it as something external to the great men who mark it by their names, as not produced by, but as productive of men such as Dante, Luther, Petrarch, and Erasmus: it was not the result but the cause of the discovery of the New World, of America in 1492, of the Cape of Good Hope in 1497, of the outburst of science, of the Copernican discoveries of the solar system in 1507. Hegel's theory of a world-spirit, Comte's of the historic growth of the civilised world through ordered successive stages, Spencer's of the evolution of the social organism, are all but various expressions of the great truth that the history of society is the history of a natural ordered growth; that there is a continuity in all the phases of our politics, of our literature, of our social life; that each phase is vitally dependent upon the other; that what we are apt to consider as causes, as decisive changes, are but incidents in a movement larger than themselves. The history of the Renaissance is "the history of the attainment of self-conscious freedom by the human spirit manifested in the European races;" it resulted in what Michelet calls "the discovery of the world and of man;" it gave the impulse alike to science and to art; it made the Middle Ages seem dark and dreary in comparison to its brilliant life.

It is with the Middle Ages that our modern European civilisation begins,—with the fall of the Roman Empire, or rather with the absorption into the Roman Empire of the new fresh force of barbarism. To civilise the strong barbaric individuality, to make it capable of realising the social tie, was the problem to be solved by earlier mediæval Europe; and the solution of this problem is found in the history of the growth of the human mind, politically and intellectually, and in the influences which acted on it during these periods. Barbarism had to undergo a severe discipline, and it was the great institution of the Middle Ages, the Church, which administered the discipline. It was the Church and its offspring, monasticism, which taught the all-importance of those qualities of self-denial, of self-sacrifice, of unselfishness, which are the foundations of social union; the recognition of which is the first principle essential to common action, to that co-operation necessary to a great nation. During the Middle Ages, the Church and monasticism inculcated these principles, emphasizing them by the doctrine of contempt of self and contempt of the world, by encouraging only those yearnings

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and aspirations after an infinite and eternal life beyond the grave. These are the ages which have always been called Dark, because during them no apparent advance was made either intellectually or politically; and because the sense of the social tie, of duty and relationship to others, could only be made an instinct by means of a severe discipline, which, representing self-denial and self-repression as the individual's best interest, checked all enterprise and originality. "Man's life is a struggle, and heroism the only excellence," was the strongest and highest sentiment of the Teuton barbarian; and Christianity taught him that heroism was the one excellence, because it showed scorn of suffering and struggle here on earth in order to win a heavenly crown. But the races of Europe, in receiving this discipline, which resulted at first in such a barren life, made the first step towards a civilisation grounded on a wider basis; they made the first step towards reconciling that problem, the great one both of individual and national life; they acquired the instincts necessary to the perfect social life; it remained to be seen whether they would ever develop those of the perfect individual life. The spirit of the Renaissance was the imprisoned spirit of humanity rebelling against the fetters that mediæval life had forged for it. The results of its rebellion, the Reformation in religion, the Renaissance in literature, mark the downfall of the institutions of the Middle Ages, the climax of the revolt that had been gradually growing against the authority of the Church and the intellectual despotism of the Schoolmen, the substitution of classic, sometimes of pagan ideals for those of monasticism and asceticism, the reaction in favour of that free individual life which had been held in such check during the Middle Ages. Man may now enjoy life without fear that the Evil One shall possess his soul.

First and foremost in this movement stands Italy,—first, because chronologically she was the earliest to attain to that belief in the dignity of man, in the indivisibility of the human race, and to that reverence for classic culture and classic ideals which is so distinctive of the Renaissance of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and secondly, she is foremost, because in her these characteristics were developed to their fullest and greatest extent; and because her political condition rendering her cosmopolitan instead of patriotic, she considered herself as bound to spread the truth abroad through Europe—she considered that she had a proselytising mission of culture and of art. Thus Italy is important to us, from the secondary point of view, as influencing

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England.) Between 1320 and the beginning of the sixteenth century, we can study clearly in Italy the characteristics of the great movement. We find there "the highest expression of belief in man as a rational being apart from theological determinations, which, together with a profound belief in and reverence for the classics, constitutes the essence of humanism." "Then the Supreme Maker," wrote Pico della Mirandola, "decreed that unto man, on whom He could bestow nought singular, should belong in common whatsoever had been given to His other creatures. Therefore He took man, made in His own individual image, and having placed him in the centre of the world, spake to him thus: 'Neither a fixed abode, nor a form in thine own likeness, nor any gift peculiar to thyself alone, have we given thee, O Adam, in order that what abode, what likeness, what gifts thou shalt choose, may be thine to have and to possess. The nature allotted to all other creatures, within laws appointed by ourselves, restrains them. Thou, restrained by no narrow bounds, according to thy own free will, in whose power I have placed thee, shalt define thy nature for thyself. I have set thee midmost the world, that thence thou mightst more conveniently survey whatsoever is in the world. Nor have we made thee either heavenly or earthly, mortal or immortal, to the end that thou being, as it were, thy own free maker and moulder, shouldst fashion thyself in what form may like thee best. Thou shalt have power to decline unto the lower or brute creatures. Thou shalt have power to be reborn unto the higher or divine, according to the sentence of thy intellect.' Thus to man, at his birth, the Father gave seeds of all variety and germs of every form of life."

And we find, too, that in Italy the reverence and affection for the classic Past rose almost into a passion: it was not merely a literary reverence—it was a feeling influencing political and moral judgment. It was thought that in the Greeks humanity was seen at its perfection. Pius II. gave amnesty to the citizens of Aretino because they were fellow-citizens of Cicero; Leonardo Bruni writes: "The Greeks far excel us in humanity and gentleness of spirit." In knowledge of the classics, in culture, lay the highest life. Only through study and learning was it possible to bridge over the gulf between the ancient and the modern world; only through them could one commune with the great spirits and souls of antiquity; only in culture could be sought immortality; only in bringing forth a work which should influence posterity could be gained that eternity of life denied to

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the individual soul. Sappho's lines to an illiterate and uncultivated friend might have been spoken by the men of the Renaissance to those outside the pale of culture :—

"So, thou shalt die
And lie
Dumb in the silent tomb :
Nor of thy name
Shall there be any fame
In ages yet to be or years to come :
For of the rose
That on Pieria blows
Thou hast no share ;
But in sad Hades' house,
Unknown, inglorious,
'Mid the dim shades that wander there,
Shalt thou flit forth and haunt the filmy air."

Of the highest and most spiritual aspect of the Renaissance Petrarch is the grandest representative. Dante stood, as it were, midway between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance : he had the strong individuality, the command over form which belonged to the men of the time of revival, but he had also the deep religious sense, the mystic yearnings of the Middle Ages. "In Petrarch scholarship and culture appeared as the divine teachers, the evangelists of mankind :" they taught that the aim of life was self-expression—self-expression in its most complete, beautiful, and harmonious form. With Petrarch love of form was indeed a passion : before he could understand Latin he was accustomed to repeat to himself the orations of Cicero, delighting in their majestic march and rounded periods, though the sense was hidden to him. But yet at the same time the man who wishes to express his thoughts in most beautiful form, must, according to Petrarch, live the best sort of life : he must live so that it comes naturally to him to express the highest thoughts and the highest emotions. "Upon the purity of his enthusiasm, the sincerity of his inspiration, depended the future well-being of the world for which he laboured. Thus for one man at least the art of letters was a priesthood, and the earnestness of his vocation made him fit to be a master of succeeding ages." But succeeding ages in Italy could not show another man who, like Petrarch, spiritualised the cult of letters, making them a power over life, taking the place of religion. Petrarch had indeed none of those mystic religious yearnings towards the Infinite which distinguished the Middle Ages ; but he was ideally and spiritually minded, and he rendered spiritual and ideal, the studies that the mediæval mind considered hopelessly mundane and finite.

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In Boccaccio we have a great man of the Renaissance, but a representative of its later and less pure spirit. "Petrarch, in his search after culture, laid stress not only on form and external beauty, but on spiritual truth and grandeur as the foundation. Boccaccio left out the latter element. An admirer of beauty and grace alone, and for themselves, he paved the way for the sensuality of later times." Of these two men, the first represented the prime, the second the decline, of this first great period, this age of enthusiasm, of desire for, and belief in culture.

The second great period of the Renaissance is that of the acquisition and systematisation of knowledge, of the discovery of manuscripts, of the foundation of libraries. Nicholas V. founds the Vatican Library in 1453, Cosmo de Medici begins the Medicean collection: it is the age of men who, like Poggio Braccolini, ransack all the cities and convents in Europe for manuscripts; of those men, the real heroes of the period, the teachers of Greek, who in the fifteenth century escaped from Constantinople, and began the worship of manuscripts, of the text of Homer, of Plato, of Aristotle. Printing presses were established at Florence, Venice, Bâle, Lyons, and Paris. Virgil was printed in 1470, Homer in 1488, Aristotle in 1498, Plato in 1513. Then comes the third age, marked both in England and Europe by the name of Erasmus. Then began that critical assimilation of the material collected, the first-fruits of which are seen in the Florentine Academy; but then also culminated in Italy that degeneration which was hinted at in the work of Boccaccio. The spirituality so strong in the personality and writings of Petrarch became absent in the thought and individuality of the majority of men who represent this phase of the Renaissance: belief in man becomes arrogance, the desire to develop and exercise the faculties becomes self-indulgence: the worship of form, the appreciation of external beauty, overpowers everything else: "an affectionate study," says Bacon, "of eloquence and copie of speech began to flourish. This grew speedily to an excess; for men began to hunt more after words than matter: more after the choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their words with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, depth of judgment. Then grew the flowing and watery vein of Osorius, the Portugal bishop, to be in price. Then did Sturmius spend such infinite and curious pains upon Cicero the orator, and Hermogenes the rhetorician, besides his

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own book of Periods and Imitation and the like. Then did Car of Cambridge and Ascham with their lectures and writings almost deify Cicero and Demosthenes, and allure all young men that were studious unto that delicate and polished kind of learning. Then did Erasmus take occasion to make the scoffing echo, *Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone;* and the echo answered in Greek, *One* (*Asine*). . . . In sum, the whole inclination of those times was rather towards copie than weight." And Erasmus, fearing its worldly tendency, goes so far as to mistrust the introduction of scholarship into the north. "One scruple still besets my mind, lest under the cloak of revived literature, Paganism should strive to raise its head, there being among Christian men, who, while they recognise the name of Christ, breathe in their hearts the spirit of the Gentiles."

Italy in this later and degenerate phase, as well as in its earlier, influenced England. In its purer and earlier stage it was the prophet of antique culture, and of a new and vigorous ideal which gave glory and interest to life: in its later stage, when its culture, its admiration for external form, was modified by no spiritual element, by no ideal of truth, by no sense of the dignity and responsibility of man,—when the spirit of Christianity had vanished and left a philosophy pagan and Machiavellian in its tendencies,—it became feared and abhorred by English thinkers. Socially it was considered the ruin of Englishmen,—"an Italianated Englishman is the devil incarnate:" politically it was discredited in English eyes, as being represented by Machiavelli, who, if not the monster of ingenious crime, the impersonation of subtle villainy as conceived by Elizabethan dramatists, yet carried frankly to an immoral extreme in politics the pagan ethics of self-interest.

England came into direct contact with Italy as early as the middle of the fourteenth century. Three of Chaucer's diplomatic missions, in 1372, 1374, and 1378, took him to Italy, and we know how much stimulus and material he received from his admiration and knowledge of the works of the first great Italians of the Renaissance. Men like Duke Humphrey of Gloucester made libraries and brought over Italian scholars into England to translate Greek works; Henry VI. and Edward IV. were both of them cultivated men, and interested in literature. In England there were a few scholars like John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, who had won fame in the schools of Italy. Both in Chaucer and in Wyclif, we can see the stirrings of that twofold movement, the first faint anticipation of the great movement of the sixteenth

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century. But the absorbing interest of a troubled national life, the absence of leisure, prevented that activity of speculative and imaginative thought, of which the result is literature. The Wars of the Roses, the quiet of exhaustion in the reign of Henry VII., when the new monarchy was gathering up its strength to begin its career of despotism, delayed the literary movement, till it came coincident with the Reformation. The final throwing off of Papal authority did not indeed happen till 1534, but long before that, signs of the movement marked by the statutes of Præmunire and Provisors, spiritually quickened by the teaching of Wyclif, and especially by the teaching of the New Learning, had shown itself. Henry VIII., actuated only by caprice and personal motives, accomplished what had really been for some time desired by the instinct of the nation; political circumstances alone had delayed the event, and thus it happened that a legal movement which upset old-established religious institutions, which quickened religious energy and demanded religious speculation, came exactly at the same time as a movement in the direction of wider culture, wider intellectual freedom,—a movement led by Italy, with its now fully-developed ideals of humanism. And to this coincidence may be partly due the moral and religious character of the Renaissance in England,—a character which distinguishes it specially from that of Italy, where humanism eventually became paganism in its most degenerate and self-indulgent form. In England religious enthusiasm mingled with literary enthusiasm: man was not left after the destruction of the religion and the ideals of the Middle Ages to satisfy his spiritual cravings with culture alone. In some of the men who represent this period in England,—in Spenser, in Sidney, in More, and in Ascham,—religious and literary enthusiasm meet and blend. Shakespeare has the deep moral sense which gives dignity and proportion to his view of life, enabling him to shape it to artistic purposes: one of the greatest of the Elizabethans was Hooker, with his fervent religious enthusiasm; and even to the end of the period, even in its decline, we have a touch of spirituality; in the obscure conceits of the so-called metaphysical school, in the religious poems of Herbert and Crashaw, in the nobility of feeling of some of the cavalier poets, and in the respect shown for morality by the dramatists of the degenerate Elizabethan stage, by Beaumont and Fletcher, even by Webster and Ford.

But the coincidence of these two movements must not count alone as the cause: for deep down in the Teutonic nature lies that want of contentment with the actual life, that craving for

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a serious solution of the problems of life and death, which a spiritual belief can alone satisfy. "Their climate is damp," says M. Taine, "hence arises a grand melancholy, and then the religious idea of duty." But climate cannot altogether explain the religious tendencies of the English Renaissance,—the causes which prevented the English from reacting so strongly against the influences of the Middle Ages, as to seek, like the Italians, to find in knowledge and culture alone, food for the soul and guidance for human conduct: for the origin and history of the whole race must be studied in all its details, if the complete nature of this movement, as of that of any movement in the life of a nation, is to be thoroughly understood.

It is enough for the purposes of literature to study, as typical of this great movement in its two aspects, the School of the New Learning. It is truly representative of the Renaissance in its broader sense, because it combined a deep religious enthusiasm,—not yet, however, at variance with established doctrine, but fighting only against degenerate custom,—with a profound belief in and reverence for the classics. It was its protest against abuses, its criticism of custom, social, political, educational, and religious, that destroyed the crushing weight of mediæval authority: in its earnestness and interest in these matters, it showed that it held things of this world to be of importance. In relieving human life from the weight of ascetic theory and practice, in supplying, through the classics, new intellectual food, it allowed the national mind to work freely: it prepared the way for that originality, for that burst of art of Elizabethan times, which was the expression of its great and healthy vitality.

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CHAPTER II.

THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND—BEGINNINGS OF THOUGHT—SCHOOL OF THE NEW LEARNING.

PART I.—*Its Work in Religion.*

COLET, John, *b.* 1466, educated at Magdalene College, Oxford; studied afterwards in Paris and Italy; 1504 made Doctor of Divinity; 1505 Dean of St. Paul's; 1510 founded St. Paul's School; *d.* 1519.
ERASMUS, Desiderius, *b.* 1467 at Rotterdam, *d.* 1536.

THE School of the New Learning is as different from the humanistic school of Italy, as it is different from the school of reformers, who began the religious revolution known as the Reformation. It differed from the Italian school in being deeply, profoundly religious: to Colet and Grocyn Greek was valuable because it was the key by which to unlock the mysteries of the New Testament; it had little in common with the Calvinistic school, because it passed with lightness and vagueness over those questions of original sin and freewill—the chief problems which engrossed the attention of this school, and which it dogmatically claimed to solve. The school of the New Learning was too literary, too largely human to seek refuge in one dogma in order to refute another; its work was perhaps more destructive than constructive in its tendency; it did more in destroying prejudices, in attacking abuses, in clearing the way for the next step in progress, than in framing the creeds which were to supersede the old ones. Its great men were influential, not because, like Luther, they were the formulators of new beliefs, new dogmas, but because they were large and liberal minded, because their teachings and their writings bore the impress of admirable and powerful individuality. Their teaching was calculated to rouse energy and inspire thought, though it might be wanting in the definiteness and dogmatism which distinguished the teaching of the Reformers, and made it intelligible and helpful to that larger mass of man-

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kind who need the authority of dogma for their guidance in life.

It was not its mission to carry through the Reformation. It was too literary in its tendencies, too tolerant, too inclined to comprehension, too undogmatic. The Calvinists and the followers of Luther, who could meet dogma by dogma, and thus give an intelligible rallying-ground to the mass, were the people who finally broke the fetters of the Church. At first, however, the divergence of the English school of the New Learning from the Reformers in Europe was not perceptible. The notion of the Oxford Reformers was that the Church should be broad—tolerant—that it should not too strictly define doctrine and enforce dogma; "it was to afford a practical bond of union whereby Christians might be united in a Christian brotherhood in spite of differences of minor matters of creed." The New Learning "in the mouth of Erasmus hinted that the doctrine of original sin was of no more importance than the problems of astrology, and treated questions of freewill as insoluble. . . . But the Augustinian system of which Luther was the exponent treated these questions as practically decided, and that by the judgment of a Church based upon a verbally inspired and infallible Bible. Luther's attitude was therefore dogmatic and occasionally inconsistent. He asserted the right of private judgment as a weapon against the Pope and Papal theory; but he was not willing that Scripture should be left to the private judgment of the individual; he recognised, as opposed to the corrupt ecclesiastical authority of the Romish Church, the existence of an ecclesiastical authority of some kind, which had established these theological hypotheses of original sin and justification by faith." Thus the Reformation in England was a movement distinct from that of the Oxford Reformers, not altogether a continuation of their work. They had agreed with Luther when, in 1517, he put up his thesis against indulgences on the church door of Wittenberg. Erasmus himself had spoken of the crimes of false pardons, Colet of the "sins of that first bishop we call the Pope." But they did not go with Luther when, in 1519, at the Diet of Worms, he practically appealed to Germany to throw off the whole of the Papal yoke in doctrine as well as in corrupt practice. The New Learning wished for no change in doctrine and pure ecclesiastical observance: it wished merely for the reform of the Church, and for the purer spirit that must come with it.

The movement of the New Learning may be said to have begun in 1496. In the Michaelmas term of this year at Oxford, John

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Colet, a late student at the University, recently returned from Italy, announced his intention of delivering a course of public lectures on St. Paul's Epistles. He had left the university in 1494, and had then commenced his studies at Florence, and while there had come into contact with three of the greatest men of the period, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and Savonarola. Marsilio Ficino, at the head of the Florentine Academy, had made it the object of his life to fuse religion and philosophy; in his study burnt two lamps, one before the image of the Virgin, the other before the bust of Plato. In his book, *De Religione Christianæ*, dedicated to Lorenzo de Medici, he grounds religion on expediency, and supports it by the authority of the classics. All religions, he says, being natural to man, contain in them some good—in particular the Christian religion; and the fact that Christianity passes the human comprehension is a sign of its divine character; "if these things be divine they must exceed the capacity of any human mind." To the support of his faith he brings the testimony of the great names of the past: faith, according to Aristotle, is the foundation of knowledge: by faith alone, as the Platonists prove, do we ascend to God. But a stronger and more inspiring influence than that of Ficino and Pico, with their endeavours to fuse Neo-Platonism and Christianity, was that of Savonarola, an influence purely spiritual and Christian. Colet was in Italy when the Papacy spiritually was at its lowest ebb. Alexander VI. and Cesar Borgia had brought it to the greatest degradation, and Savonarola, with his burning enthusiasm for the reform of the Church, with his great and irresistible personality, was heading a purer religious movement. For two years and more he "had been preaching that a scourge was at hand, that the world was certainly not framed for the lasting convenience of hypocrites, libertines, and oppressors. From the midst of those smiling heavens he had seen a sword hanging—the sword of God's justice—which was speedily to descend with purifying punishment on the Church and the world. In brilliant Ferrara, seventeen years before, the contradiction between men's lives and their professed beliefs had pressed upon him with a force that had been enough to destroy his appetite for the world, and at the age of twenty-three had driven him into the cloister. He believed that God had committed to the Church the sacred lamp of truth for the guidance and salvation of men, and he saw that the Church in its corruption had become as a sepulchre to hide the lamp. As the years went on scandals increased and multiplied, and hypocrisy seemed to have given place to impu-

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dence. Had the world then ceased to have a righteous ruler? Was the Church finally forsaken? No, assuredly; in the Sacred Book there was a record of the past, in which might be seen as in a glance what would be in the days to come, and the book showed that when the wickedness of the chosen people, type of the Christian Church, had become crying, the judgments of God had descended on them. . . . But the real force of demonstration for Girolamo Savonarola lay in his own burning indignation at the sight of wrong, in his fervent belief in an unseen justice which would put an end to the wrong, and in an unseen Purity to which lying and uncleanness were an abomination. To his ardent power-loving soul, believing in great ends, and longing to achieve those ends by the exertion of its own strong will, the faith in a supreme and righteous ruler became one with the faith in a speedy divine interposition that would punish and reclaim." And this man had a power, rarely equalled, of impressing his belief on others, of swaying very various minds. Lorenzo de Medici tried in vain to gain his friendship; in vain on his deathbed he asked for absolution. Savonarola refused to grant his friendship and his spiritual offices to one who was the enemy of reform, the supporter of corruption in Church and State. Pico della Mirandola, though he clung to his Neo-Platonism, became at his death a half-acknowledged disciple of the Frate; he was buried in the robes of Savonarola's order and within the precincts of Savonarola's church. Marsilio Ficino, more purely pagan in his tendencies, was certainly influenced, though not for long, by his powerful enthusiasm. Colet must have heard him preach in the Duomo at Florence. He must have heard at least one of those powerful appeals to the religious world, the first of which was given in 1491—the call to rally against tyranny in Church and State, to fight against idolatry of philosophy and neglect of the Bible. Colet, an Englishman with a profound moral sense, could not but be influenced by a teaching appealing so strongly to his moral sympathies. Here was a man who had a faith, not merely speculative and philosophic, but a faith which stimulated and supported a burning enthusiasm for right, and a glowing indignation against wrong. And thus Colet gave himself up to the study of the sources from whence Savonarola claimed to draw his inspiration—to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and of the works of the Fathers of that purer Church to which Savonarola pointed as the model of its degenerate child. He studied classics indeed, but only as a means to improve his style, only to enable him to make his teaching of the Gospel

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more acceptable to the English people,—a work which he was now to consider as his mission. His attitude is that of Erasmus in his preface to the *Novum Instrumentum:* "In times like these, when men are pursuing with such zest all branches of knowledge, how is it that the philosophy of Christ should alone be derided by some, neglected by many, treated by the few who devote themselves to it with coldness, not to say insincerity? Whilst in all other branches of learning the human mind is straining its genius to master all subtleties, and toiling to overcome all difficulties, why is it that this one philosophy alone is not pursued with equal earnestness at least by those who profess to be Christians? Platonists, Pythagoreans, and the disciples of all other philosophers, are well instructed and ready to fight for their sect. Why do not Christians with yet more abundant zeal espouse the cause of *their* Master and Prince? Shall Christ be put in comparison with Zeno and Aristotle,—his doctrine with their insignificant precepts? Whatever other philosophers may have been, He alone is a teacher from heaven; He alone was able to teach certain and eternal wisdom; He alone taught things pertaining to salvation, because He alone is its author; He alone absolutely practised what He preached, and is able to make good what He promised. The philosophy of Christ, moreover, is to be learned from its few books with far less labour than the Aristotelian philosophy is to be extracted from its multitude of ponderous and conflicting commentaries. Nor is anxious preparatory learning needful to the Christian. Its *viaticum* is simple and at hand to all,—only bring a pious and open heart, imbued above all things with a pure and simple faith." With these views, with the enthusiasm given by a "pure and simple faith," Colet came back to England; his strength lay in no dogma, but "in the conviction that the food for all spiritual craving was to be found in the Bible; that its inspired words were to be interpreted simply and directly without the intervention of ecclesiastic and scholastic dogma." Again, the words of Erasmus can be used as expressing his opinion: "The mysteries of kings it may be safer to conceal, but Christ wished His mysteries to be published as openly as possible. I wish that even the weakest woman should read the gospel—should read the Epistles of Paul. And I wish these were translated into all languages, so that they might be read and understood, not only by Scots and Irishmen, but also by Turks and Saracens. To make them understood is surely the first step." To hold these views, and to act on them, was to strike at the very root of

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mediæval religion and mediæval scholasticism. "Keep firmly to the Bible and to the Apostle's Creed, and let divines, if they like, dispute about the rest," said Colet, and thus expressed in these few words his freedom from the oppressive yoke of ecclesiastic and scholastic authority, and his contempt of the great structure of mediæval divinity, with its six or seven hundred propositions, considered so vital by the mediæval mind, forty-three propositions concerning the nature of God, forty-five propositions concerning the nature of man. He did not consider human ingenuity worthily employed on such questions, as to whether God can be in more than one place at one and the same time, as how many angels can stand on the point of a needle, whether they have local motion or not. All these problems of scholastic divinity laid down by Aquinas in *Summæ Theologiæ*, Colet with that independence of mind which could belong only to a man of the Renaissance put aside with scorn. He refused to recognise the two Molochs before which his predecessors had bowed, the dogma of the Church and the dogma of Aristotle's logic, the latter debased by these so-called disciples, employing itself on the material allowed by the Church, till the human mind seemed to lose itself in a series of intellectual gymnastics, acquiring a profound indifference to facts, and an extraordinary subtlety in dealing with barren and useless problems.

Secondly, Colet had to attack that theory, necessarily upheld by the Schoolmen, but a fatal obstacle to those who wished for the simple and direct interpretation of the Bible, viz. that belief held by every orthodox divine, "in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible, considered as an arsenal of texts, each text capable of several meanings, and capable of being severed from their context and interpreted to suit the convenience of ecclesiastic dogma." "Inasmuch," says Aquinas, "as God is the author of the Holy Scriptures, and all things were at one time present to His mind, therefore under a single text several meanings can be expressed; the literal sense is manifold; the spiritual sense threefold: allegorical, moral, anagogical." Thus a single text may mean several different things, and an instance of their hopeless want of simplicity was their belief that the literal sense profited nothing; "it is hurtful, noisome, and killeth the soul;" and St. Paul was quoted: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." In the words of a scholar contemporary with Colet, "They were wont to look on no more Scripture than they found in their Duns . . . some of them will prove a point of faith as well out of a fable of Ovid or out of any other poet as out

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of St. John's Gospel or St. Paul's Epistles." Thus the Bible had become a dead book, and Colet, feeling that the purity of the Christian faith demanded its separation from scholasticism, made it his first object in his lectures on St. Paul's Epistles to strike a direct blow at the method of scholastic interpretation of the Scriptures. He displayed in them no analytical skill; he did not propound problems, and, after the manner of the Schoolmen, instead of finding solutions, find distinctions; he felt with Bacon that the strength of any train of thought depends on viewing all the facts together, in treating all as parts of a whole; that weakness comes when the parts are considered separately. Thus he treated St. Paul's Epistles as a whole, endeavouring to bring out their central meaning and their direct bearing on practical life; and by tracing as far as possible the workings of the mind that prompted the words and thoughts, to communicate as much as possible of his spirit, and so to give that sympathy which makes understanding simpler. In dealing with the Epistle to the Romans he naturally touched on the question of freewill, the great question with the Wittenberg Reformers; but he touched on it with a vagueness which came from his anti-philosophic tendencies; his great spiritual enthusiasm, which made minor moral problems dim to him, caused him to pass over it lightly, offering only a mystic solution, which could be satisfactory to none save those who shared his spiritual temperament. "The soul is won over to God by love, and as so, willingly, and yet by no merit of its own." This was the same theory by which Savonarola, according to Villari, explained to a certain extent the mystery of human liberty and divine omnipotence. Colet says: "Grace is nothing but the love of God towards men, towards those, *i.e.* whom He wills to love, and in loving to inspire with the Holy Spirit which itself is love and the love of God . . . and when we speak of men as being called, justified, and glorified by grace, we mean nothing else than that men love in return God who loves them."

The men of the new learning were essentially practical men, not busied over the speculative solution of moral problems,—scholars indeed, but anxious above all to communicate the truths and the light which they esteemed themselves to have gained by study; and to Colet the great question of ecclesiastical reform, which was naturally raised by the influence he had come under, and by his mode of thought, became a vital burning subject, engrossing the principal share of his attention, dwarfing in its importance the dogmatic questions of original sin and freewill.

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The personality of St. Paul himself was a rebuke to ecclesiastics of the day: "The priests of our time might well be admonished to set such an example as this amongst their own parishioners, as, for example, St. Paul, who chose to get his living with his hands at the trade of tent-making, so as to avoid over-suspicion of avarice or scandal to the Gospel." It would be well if "those lost fools," as he at one time called the clergy, would bestir themselves and cultivate that energy which comes only from temperate and unselfish living. It was from the study of the pseudo-Dionysian writers that he received the most powerful stimulus to his efforts for Church reform. These writings were supposed to be the productions of Dionysius, the Areopagite, the disciple of St. Paul, and as such were read and studied by Colet; and he was much grieved when Grocyn—superior to him as a Greek scholar—in 1498, gave it as his firm opinion, grounded on study and examination of them, that they must belong to a much later date. The Florentine school had studied them much, because of the mixture they contained of Neo-Platonism and Christianity; but while the Florentine drew most from the philosophic element, Colet made most of the Christian element which was derived from the purer Christianity of the early Church, and in its purity of observance and simplicity of doctrine gave a severe rebuke to the ecclesiastical scandals of the day, while it claimed to show the sacred and apostolic origin of the monarchical system and its sacraments. It assumed that any priesthood laying claim to apostolic origin must above all things lay stress on the pure and personal holiness of its members. Sacraments were nothing apart from the purity and reality of the spiritual meaning they bore to those who received and those who administered them. "It is because these most holy traditions have been superseded and neglected, and men have fallen away from the spirit of God to their own inventions, that beyond all doubt all things have been wretchedly disturbed and confounded, and, as I said before, unless God shall have mercy upon us, all things will go to ruin." Stimulated by "these holy traditions," he put his greatest energy into efforts, then so full of risk, towards religious reform. In 1504 he was made doctor and Dean of St. Paul's, and in 1512 he was appointed to preach the sermon before the members of Convocation assembled nominally for the extirpation of heresy really because the King wanted money for his expedition to France. He had to preach to bishops who had received their benefices as the reward of purely secular services, or because they had interest in high

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places, little or sometimes no regard being paid to their culture or merit. There was one bishop of whom Erasmus speaks, a youth so illiterate that he offered to Erasmus a benefice and a large sum of money if he would undertake his tuition for a year—a bribe which Erasmus refused; there were foreign bishops who only resided for a short time in their dioceses: the Bishop of Bath and Wells was a foreigner, and lived almost entirely abroad; the Bishop of Winchester was appointed by the Pope, and lived and died at Rome. Lastly, there was that churchman of gigantic ability and secular aims, who was as conspicuous among the political school of ecclesiastics as Julius II. was among those popes of the secularised Church of the fifteenth century, viz. Wolsey, who, high in royal favour, always engaged in affairs of state, lately promoted to the deanery of Lincoln, waiting for a vacant bishopric, and already possessing two rectories, a prebend, and a canonry, rose eventually from a bishop to be an archbishop, a legate, and a cardinal, and failed only to obtain the Papal crown. It was to such an audience that Colet spoke with great frankness, laying bare the fact that "the Church had become foul and deformed," describing its condition, exhorting them to reform it, and showing what the necessary measures must be. "If by chance," he says in conclusion, "I should seem to have gone too far in this sermon,—if I have said anything with too much warmth,—forgive it me, and pardon a man speaking out of zeal, a man sorrowing for the ruin of the Church; and passing by any foolishness of mine, consider the thing itself." This humility was not copied from Savonarola: the Italian burnt too much with the sense of wrong to think or even to care what others thought. But probably Colet's success was due to the tact he showed in his personal dealings with the authorities, whose conduct he so desired to reform. The young King Henry VIII. was on the whole favourably inclined to the New Learning, holding in great respect its secular work, its study and teaching of the classics. And well it was that he felt kindly towards it, that he encouraged it, hoping "it would reform the corrupt morals of the age," for Colet was carried by his enthusiasm so far as to preach against the Continental wars, against the aim and the means of Henry VIII.'s cherished ambition, "the recovery of his lost inheritance and patrimony, France." The interview in which the King's resentment was soothed after it had been provoked by the attack on his policy, does perhaps more credit to the King's magnanimity than to Colet's behaviour, which savours rather of weakness in its vague statements and recriminations.

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Well it was for Colet that his religious efforts were entirely agreeable to royal authority—that he did not clash with the Tudor views in doctrine. Colet's main aim was the reform of ecclesiastical custom: his independent mind had not yet carried him into what his contemporaries called heresy. Yet among those who attended his lectures—so earnest in their thought and so simple in their style as to merit Erasmus's commendation, "Your words having birth in your heart and not on your lips, expressing with ease what others can hardly express with the greatest labour"—were many Lollards, attracted no doubt by his absence of formalism, by his attempt to grasp the spiritual meaning of religion. But Colet was no more a Lollard than he was an orthodox follower of the Catholic Church. Neither was he, strictly speaking, a humanist, for there was in his fervent appeal to his hearers to follow the example of Christ, a tinge of the asceticism of the Middle Ages. The secret, he says, of Christ's wonderful example, lay in His keeping Himself as retired as possible from the world, from the lust of the flesh and lust of the eye. "His body He held altogether in obedience and service to His blessed mind, eating after long fasts, sleeping after long watching, caring nothing for what belongs to wealth or fortune." Yet monasticism and its superstitions had no hold on him. He had none of the Catholic reverence for the great monk, Thomas à Becket. His disgust was great when, in 1514, visiting the shrine of the martyr, he was presented with the saint's shoe to kiss.

Colet is one of the most representative men of the Renaissance of Thought in England, belonging to no one Church, to no definite sect or party, widely cultivated and widely tolerant, guided by no authority, but striving always to be true to his own inner light.

Much more decided and definite in his views—much more brilliant—was his contemporary and friend, Erasmus, a man who, though not English, plays an important part in England as a prominent disciple of the New Learning,—specially important, perhaps, as suggesting to More his method of social and political criticism. Erasmus had been educated at Paris among the straitest sect of scholastic logicians; he was well versed in the scholastic subtleties of Duns Scotus, and so celebrated for the almost serpent-like ingenuity of his arguments, that More,—at the conclusion of an argument in which Erasmus, at their first meeting, had, in Scotist fashion, defended the "worser part,"—replying to his query "aut tu es Morus, aut nullus," answered "aut tu es

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Erasmus, aut diabolus." Erasmus had at his fingers' ends the knowledge of that great body of mediæval science which claimed to embrace the whole field of universal knowledge,—its scholars thinking, as Galileo says, that they could arrive at scientific truth, not by the investigation of fact, but by the comparison of ancient manuscripts. These so-called scientific truths were used by the Schoolmen to support their theological system, and it was because men like Bruno and Galileo discovered facts which upset not only their science but their theology, that they were the victims of persecution. Disgusted with this science and this theology, Erasmus came in 1498 to Oxford with Lord Mountjoy in order to learn Greek of Grocyn and Linacre. His intention had been to go on afterwards to Italy, but after a few months' experience of Oxford life he writes "that he had found in England so much polish and learning, not showy, shallow learning, but profound and exact both in Latin and Greek, that now he would hardly care much about going to Italy at all. . . . When I listen to my friend Colet," he says, "it seems to me like listening to Plato himself." In the winter of 1499-1500 Erasmus varied his experiences by a life at Court. In 1500 he returned to Paris, where, in spite of a life spent in struggle with poverty and sickness, he wrote his *Adagia*. It is in this work, a translation and collection of Greek and Latin proverbs, that he appears specially as a representative of the third age of the Italian Renaissance, of that spirit of criticism and philosophy which followed in Italy on the desire of acquisition; a spirit which Erasmus, as well as the English disciples of the New Learning, combined with the earlier characteristics of the Renaissance—with the strong and enthusiastic reverence for classic culture.

In his religious works—in the *Enchiridion*, in his *Novum Instrumentum*—Erasmus shows himself a disciple of Colet: in his *Praise of Folly* he shows himself a precursor of More. The *Praise of Folly*, written 1509-1510 to beguile his journey from England to Italy, is the first of a series of works containing, in a more or less disguised form, social and political criticism. Folly is represented as entering the rostrum with cap and bells, expressing with a frank severity her views on the condition of society and of politics. In the ingenious way in which the bold speakers of the time avoided the responsibility of their words, Folly apologises for her speeches as being merely those of Foolishness incarnated, yet at the same time adds, "but a fool speaks oft a reasonable truth." The book is a satire upon follies of all kinds, "on the bookworm, the sportsman, the grammarian,

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the superstitious, the schools and schoolmen, on scholastic science, theology and its divines." Erasmus's exceeding severity to the latter shows that he had suffered much from them. "Their pride and irritability are such that they will come down upon me with their 600 conclusions and compel me to recant or declare me a heretic forthwith. They explain to their own satisfaction the most hidden mysteries; how the universe was constructed and arranged; through what channels the stain of original sin descends to posterity; how the miraculous birth of Christ was effected; how in the Eucharistic wafer the accidents can exist without a substance, and so forth; and they think themselves equal to the solutions of questions such as these: Whether God could have taken upon Himself the nature of a woman, a devil, an ass, a gourd, or a stone, and how in that case a gourd could have preached, worked miracles, and be nailed to the cross; what Peter would have consecrated if he had consecrated the Eucharist at the moment when the body of Christ was hanging on the Cross." If Erasmus could boldly hold up to ridicule things which his education had taught him were the most sacred of all mysteries,—the reverence for which he had hardly shaken off when he came to England, being shocked and astonished at Colet's anger against Thomas Aquinas and his servile followers,—his satire on ecclesiastical, social, and political affairs could not surely be wanting in candour and impartiality. The monks he places in a body among the goats on the left hand of God; his satire ascends even to the personality generally considered the most sacred and above criticism. The Pope Julius II. is alluded to as a decrepit old man, delighting in war. His remarks on the duty of kings must have been a commentary far from pleasant on the action of Henry VIII. He says "it is the duty of kings to seek their public and not their private good; but princes cast such care to the world, and only care for their own pleasure." When the memory of Empson and Dudley and of Henry VII. was fresh, words like the following were full of meaning: "They think they fill the position well if they hunt with diligence, if they keep good houses, if they can make gain to themselves by the sale of offices and places, if they can daily devise some new means of undermining the wealth of citizens and raking it into their own exchequer, disguising the iniquity of such proceedings by some specious pretence and show of legality." His views on the Pope are no less to the point, and enunciated with no less boldness.

Julius II., then on the Papal throne, marks an important

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epoch in the history of the papacy—an epoch for which the great Hildebrand had in earlier times paved the way. Hildebrand had endeavoured to revive the spiritual supremacy of the papacy; he had tried to realise his ambitious conception of the Papal prerogative; he attempted to make the Pope in very truth the spiritual head of Christendom, the ruling power in that universal and mystic monarchy of which the Roman Emperor was supposed to be the temporal head. But in attempting to spiritualise the world he secularised the papacy. The line between the spiritual and temporal powers was vaguely defined, and Hildebrand brought these two powers into collision by the attempt to extend the spiritual dominion of the Church. Then began that duel of the Emperor and the Pope which destroyed for ever the theory and practice of a universal Roman empire, and gradually degraded the spiritual prestige of the papacy in Europe. The Pope had to seek for allies in the struggle with the Emperor: he divided Europe against itself, and sunk more and more to the position of a temporal monarch. Discredited by his immediate predecessors, it was ruined by Julius II. when he bent his energies to making the papacy a temporal Christian principality,—when, as Von Ranke says, "he devoted himself to the gratification of that innate love of war and conquest which was indeed the ruling passion of his life." Where was now the priesthood that could say, Lo! we have left all and followed thee? "And although," says Erasmus, "war be a thing so savage that it becomes wild beasts rather than men,—so frantic that the poets feigned it to be the work of the furies, so pestilent that it blights at once all morality, so unjust that it can be best waged by the worst of ruffians, so impious that it has nothing in common with Christ,—yet to the neglect of everything else he devotes himself to war alone." War was not only the condition of the papacy, it was also that of Europe. For Europe was in a state of transition, no longer recognising the Pope as spiritual head, or even as arbiter in international quarrels, and yet not so fully recognising its own existence as a system of contiguous states as to formulate rules of international intercourse. War was the only method of settling the claims of these growing states, each intent on self-aggrandisement, and thinking the prosperity of one nation must be grounded on the ruin of another. The Emperor was intriguing by marriage to gain Hungary and Bohemia, to annex the Netherlands, Franche Comté and Artois, Castile and Aragon; and what aggrandisement he could not effect by marriage he tried to effect by arms, and to make what

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he gained independent of Papal interference and hereditary in the house of Hapsburg. Louis of France was laying claim to a great part of Italy. Henry VIII., besides aiming at the conquest of France, was ready to be a candidate for the empire, and was plotting to secure the papacy for Wolsey. The neglect of national interests for what appeared to be but the selfish personal aims of kings, the absence of all international morality, the shameless breaches of faith continually occurring between the crowned heads, could not fail to rouse Erasmus. The political allusions in the *Praise of Folly* were but the prelude to his more serious political work, *The Christian Prince.*

In *The Christian Prince*, published 1516, Erasmus develops his theory of the duties of a prince in marked contrast to the practice he observed: "If you find you cannot defend your kingdom without violating justice, without shedding much human blood, without much injury to religion, lay it down and retire from it . . . a good prince never enters upon war at all unless after trying all possible means to avoid it." These views suggest by way of contrast those of Machiavelli in *The Prince*, written in 1513, with the same object, but in a far different spirit. "A prince," says Machiavelli, "should have but one object, one thought, one art—the art of war;" and the comparison brings out the intense dissimilarity between the course of the Renaissances in England and in Italy. In Italy the effort after the union of faith and reason had been given up. The Christian enthusiasm roused by Savonarola had passed away; thwarted, scorned, and disgraced, stripped of his friar's frock by the Bishop of Vasona, he had died amid the apparent ruin of all he had striven for, saying only "Christ did more for me." The spiritual and philosophic enthusiasm of Ficino and Pico had vanished. It was the fashion to scoff at Christianity, to believe only in the philosophy of Pliny and Aristotle. Machiavelli in *The Prince* had codified the maxims of the dominant anti-Christian school of politics; he boldly formulated the theory which all Europe was tacitly carrying into practice. He had the great quality of frankness, or, in other words, he had that shamelessness which denies to virtue even the faint compliment of belief. Hegel says it was necessity which drove him to it; it was his sense of the necessity of constituting a state which caused him to lay down the principles on which alone he thought a state could be formed under the circumstances . . . "and though our idea of freedom is incompatible with the means which he proposes, both as the only available and also as wholly justifiable, including as these

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do the most reckless violence, all kinds of deception, murder, and the like, yet we must confess that the despots who had to be subdued were assailable in no other way, inasmuch as indomitable lawlessness and perfect depravity were thoroughly engrained in them." Macaulay believes in the "generous heart of Clement;" he quotes the rhetoric of the patriotic appeal to Lorenzo de Medici, for whom the treatise was penned, animated with the spirit of the prophecy of Petrarch, with which it closes:—

> "Lo! valour against rage
> Shall take up arms, nor shall the fight be long,
> For that old heritage
> Of courage in Italian hearts is stout and strong."

But even the sum of Machiavelli's virtues cannot suffice to raise him out of the rank of depraved human nature. What makes a man great is not his capacity for understanding human nature as it is, but his capacity for understanding its possibilities, what it might be and what it can be, his capacity for connecting conduct with a high idea of duty, however depraved and degenerate be the world in which he has to live and act. But simplicity and goodness were to Machiavelli synonymous with ignorance and foolishness. The souls of those who, like Peter Soderini, could be guileless in a world of sin, were fit only to go to the limbo of babes. He is the true representative of Italian thought and action at this epoch, wanting in beliefs, wanting in ideals, in the conditions of healthy progress. He stands out in strong contrast to the men of the English school—men wanting, perhaps, in his subtlety and keenness of his thought, but whose morality was not determined by the force of existing circumstances, who were capable of energetic protest and free healthy criticism suggested by reverence for ideals. Of the political and social ideas of the English school More, stimulated probably by Erasmus, is the representative, as Colet is of its religious and educational aims. In his *Utopia* we have an exposition of the social and political aims of the New Learning, as in Colet's sermons and treatises we have the expression of its religious views.

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PART II.—*Its Work in Social and Political Criticism.*

MORE, Thomas, *b.* 1478; at Canterbury College, Oxford, 1492-93; studies at New Inn, 1494-95; enters Lincoln's Inn, 1496; meets Erasmus, 1498; enters Parliament, 1504; made under-sheriff, 1509; life at Court commences, 1518; made Lord Chancellor, 1529; resigns his office, 1532; executed, 1535.—Second part of *Utopia* written, 1515.—First, 1516.

More stands out not only as a representative of the New Learning on its political and social side, but as one of the most sincere and genial souls that have ever embodied their thoughts in literature. To no one can he better be compared than to Charles Lamb, possessing a nature charming in its simplicity and its spontaneity, yet capable at the same time of the most unflinching purpose and of the greatest heroism; guiding his conduct by a high idea of duty, yet neither "reproving other men's lives nor glorying in his own." No gratified sense of superiority is at the root of his satire: "it is animated by that loving laughter in which the only recognised superiority is the ideal self, the god within, holding the mirror and the scourge for our pettiness as well as our neighbour's." He was born in 1478. His father, a successful lawyer, placed him, according to the custom of the times, in domestic service with the Archbishop and Cardinal Morton, a man of whom More speaks with enthusiasm in the first book of *Utopia*, who was celebrated as the friend of Edward IV. and the enemy of Richard III.; influential in raising Henry VII. to the throne, in promoting his schemes; known to posterity as the author of that obnoxious tax called "Morton's Fork." Here he imbibed culture and the ideas of courtly life, and so quick was his wit and so promising his intellect that the Cardinal entertained the highest hopes for his future. "This child here, waiting at table," he said one day, "whoever will live to see it, shall prove a marvellous man." When he was at Oxford in 1492-93 he first met Colet, who, though twelve years older, was then studying Greek under Grocyn and Linacre. Colet's opinion corroborated that of the Cardinal: More in his eyes was "the one genius of whom England can boast." He is "the sweetest Thomas," of whom Erasmus says: "When did nature mould a character more gentle, more endearing, more happy." His college career was prematurely cut short. His father, fearing that the study of the Greek language and philosophy, which had evidently a great charm for him, would deter him from that rigid and

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severe course of studies necessary as preparation for the bar, removed him from Oxford, and from 1494 to 1495 we find him reading at the New Inn. After his term of legal study was over and he was called to the bar, he began his lectures in the Church of St. Lawrence on the "De Civitate Dei," attempting in them to show the connection between the history of the Romans and their character and religion. He was afterwards appointed reader at Furnival's Inn, and in 1503-4, when only twenty-five, he became member of Parliament, and sat in that last and most subservient Parliament of Henry VII., of which Dudley was the Speaker. "In this Parliament the King demanded two so-called reasonable aids, one for the marriage of the King's daughter Margaret with the King of Scots, the other for the knighting of the King's son. These reasonable aids were made the foundation of a demand of three-fifteenths, one half as much again as he had previously required to defray the cost of the recent war." The grant had passed two readings, when More arose and "made such arguments and reasons there against," says his son-in-law, Roper, "that the King's demands were clean overthrown, and it was brought word to the King that a beardless boy had disappointed all his purpose." The King gained only £30,000, one-third less he demanded. What wonder, then, that after this the King's wrath should follow the family of More, picking a quarrel with the father, and so threatening the son as to oblige him to retire for some time into seclusion. He remained in retirement from 1504 to 1505, and it is during this period that he went through a phase very natural to a simple ideal nature. He thought of becoming a monk, of living in the cloister, true to those principles whose exercise brought struggle and ruin in practical life. He indulged in that asceticism which the Church thought necessary to purify and discipline the corrupt body, and to make it the true servant of the soul. It was then that he took to "that inner sharp shirt of hair," which he wore all his life, sending it a few days before his death, "not willing to have it seen," says Roper, "to my wife, his dearly beloved daughter, . . . and he used also sometimes to punish his body with whippes, the cords knotted." Probably this phase was cut short by the beginning of his friendship with Colet, who came to London to take his duties at St. Paul's in 1504. To Colet he soon became deeply attached. In one of his absences he writes to him: "Meanwhile I shall spend my time with Grocyn, Linacre, and Lilly" (Lilly, the grammarian, had been one of his earliest

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friends, and had shared with him the wish to become a monk). "The first is director of my life in your absence, the second is master of my studies, and the third my most dear companion." As he began again to study Greek, and had for his greatest friend a man whose fiercest zeal was directed against the formalism and degeneration of the monastic class, the idea of the cloister began to lose its hold on him. Monasticism, he found, did not solve the problem of life. He saw that the solution of it was not found in the separation of the spiritual from the worldly life, but in their reconciliation, in the compromise between the ideal and the actual. He began to study and translate some of the works of Pico della Mirandola, and was specially interested in his letters to his nephew, which are indeed the autobiography of this man, who united the most fervent Christian piety with that enthusiasm for humane studies which came in with the Renaissance. He read how Pico scourged his own flesh in remembrance of the passion and death that Christ suffered for his sake; how he always bore in mind the thought that "the Son of God died for thee, and thou thyself shalt die shortly;" but at the same time he saw how Pico still was concerned with practical life; how he never wished to shirk its duties, never lost his interest in it; how he prayed that he might not so embrace Martha as utterly to forget Mary; and how, in spite of the warning of Savonarola, he remained a layman to the end. In 1505 More's decision to embrace a practical life was emphasized by his marriage; and Roper tells us as an instance of his tact and consideration how he turned away his affection from a younger daughter, who was the most attractive, towards the elder, fearing that she might feel hurt if her younger sister were preferred before her. During the remainder of Henry VII.'s life he lived in a state of continual fear; but when on April 23, 1509, Henry VII. died and Henry VIII. came to the throne, and a new *régime* began marked by the execution of Empson and Dudley, More was appointed under-sheriff in the city. Much was hoped by the New Learning of the young King. Erasmus pays him the highest compliment in his power when, sending him *The Christian Prince*, he speaks of him "as delighting in the converse of learned and prudent men, especially of those who did not know how to speak just what they thought would please." Their hopes were not entirely disappointed. "Much of the new life of English literature was due," says Mr. Stopford Brooke, "to the patronage of the new King." Much of the stimulus to study Greek and Latin was

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given by him; and on one occasion when an Oxford divine had been preaching against the study of Greek, he silenced him for the future by saying, "the students will do well to devote themselves with energy and spirit to the study of Greek literature;" and when there was called before him a preacher who had stigmatised all who studied Greek as heretics, and excused himself by saying he was carried away by the Spirit, the King replied, "the spirit was not the Spirit of Christ but the spirit of foolishness," and forbade him ever again to preach at Court.

More presented to the King on his accession some congratulatory verses; yet although he shared the hopes of the New Learning, and accepted office under him, he showed himself by no means servile. He refused, a few years later, a pension offered him by the Government; and in the city, in his public career, he was remarkable for the impartiality of his dealings in the suits between King and subject,—an impartiality which was only equalled by his disinterestedness in his own profession. He always tried to bring about a friendly agreement before going to law, and would never undertake any cause that he did not consider just. His reputation for uprightness, joined to his business capacity, caused him to be much sought after. When Erasmus impatiently demands letters of him, he replies that he is constantly engaged in grave affairs. He is frequently closeted with the Lord Chancellor; and his son-in-law Roper says "there was at that time in none of the Prince's Courts of the Law of the realm any matter of importance in controversy wherein he was not one with part of the council;" he acquired experience and tact in the management of the King. "Tell him what he ought to do," he says to Cromwell, "and not what he can do, for if he knew his own strength, hard were it for any man to rule him." It was in the intervals of such business he wrote his *History of Richard III.* In 1515 he was sent with others on an embassy to settle a quarrel between England and the Netherlands, and was chosen specially to represent the interests of the merchants of London. In the course of this quarrel Parliament, to revenge itself on the Netherlands, had forbidden the exportation of wool from Norfolk to Holland and Zealand. The settlement of the dispute was therefore very important to the trading classes of England. It was during this embassy that More conceived the idea of writing the *Utopia*. On his return the success of his conduct in the embassy, together with the cleverness and ingenuity he displayed in defending the rights of the Pope with regard to a ship which the King claimed in forfeiture, caused

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Henry "no longer to forbear his services." The King had so far changed his warlike policy as to give up his designs on France, and enter into alliance with it; and More, believing in the good intentions of the King, overcame his reluctance to accept office—a reluctance of which he gives the reasons in the first book of the *Utopia*. Years afterwards he reminds the King "of those most godly words which his highness did speak unto him at his first coming into his noble service,—the most virtuous lesson that ever a prince taught his servant, willing him first to look to God, and after God to him." During the term of his office we see him uniformly independent and upright. Three things More strove for in his political career,—universal peace, uniformity of religion, and the King's marriage. "Now would to God, son Roper, upon condition three things were well established in Christendom, I were put in a sack and presently cast into the Thames." In 1530 he resigns the Chancellorship, foreboding differences which would arise between him and the King when the Acts of Supremacy and Succession, then in contemplation, were passed. These Acts tended to advance none of his objects. More, as a disciple of the New Learning, eager for reform, but faithful to the Church, could not but disapprove of this hurried and complete separation from Rome, still less could he admit the King's right to settle the divorce on his own authority. Nor could he approve of a marriage which, instead of advancing the King's amicable relationship with the states of Europe, would plunge him into dissensions.

And thus More, refusing to take the oaths attached to these Acts, suffered martyrdom. He underwent it with a cheerful spirit, untinged by bitterness or doubt; and surely no martyr had put before him so strongly that commonplace side of facts which seems to rob martyrdom of all its heroism and glory. He was visited in prison by his second wife, "a simple woman, and somewhat worldly too," whom he had married in 1515 for the sake of his children. "I marvel," she says to him, "that you that have always hitherto been considered so wise a man will now so play the fool as to be in this close filthy hole when you might be abroad at liberty if you would only do as all the bishops and learned men have done. . . . Why not return to the right farye house at Chelsea?"—"I pray thee, good mother Alice," he answered, "tell me one thing—is not this house as nigh heaven as mine own?"

On the 6th of July 1535 his pure and upright life closed. His age, as incapable of understanding his high aims and pur-

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poses as his wife, passed judgment on him thus: "It is much to be lamented of all," says Robynson, the translator of the *Utopia*, "and not only of us Englishmen, that a man of so incomparable witte, of so profound knowledge, of so absolute learning, and of so fine eloquence, was yet, nevertheless, so much blinded, rather with obstinacie than with ignorance, that he could not or rather would not see the shining light of God's Holy Truth in certain principal points of Christian religion: but did rather choose to persevere and continue in his wilful and stubborn obstinacie even to the very death."

The matter of the *Utopia* has a threefold interest for us. It not only embodies the spirit of criticism on social and political affairs, distinctive of this earliest phase of the English Renaissance,—it not only reveals the mind of the author, rare in its sympathy and originality,—but it gives by its satire that corroboration of historical, political, and social fact so valuable from a contemporary.

The first book is concerned with the conversation between More and the traveller Raphael Hythloday, the second with Raphael's description of the Commonwealth, which had so charmed him in his travels. The first book has perhaps the greatest historical interest, as speaking plainly and directly of the conditions of things at the time, and showing the actual nature of the relations between the King and More. It was written after the second book in 1516, when Wolsey was urging him to enter the royal service. It is supposed that he wished to show in this book how severely he judged the state of the realm, how severely he censured the King's action; that he could not change these views if he accepted office under the King; and that he would never accept a post under Government unless there was a possibility of modifying the King's action. In both books More attempts to give reality and force to his conceptions by describing every detail of his fictitious personages and his fictitious Commonwealth with an appearance of great precision and accuracy. He tries thus to supply the place of that glowing and vivid imagination which an author in a work like this must have, if he wishes to make it attractive and carry the reader along with him.

The book opens with the meeting of More while on his embassy with a stranger, "a man well stricken in years, with a black sun-burned face, with a long beard, and a cloak cast homely about his shoulders" . . . "a man who had sailed, not indeed as the mariner Palinure, but as the expert and prudent prince, Ulysses—yea, rather as the ancient and sage philosopher

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Plato. To this man, Raphael Hythloday, More is introduced by his friend, Peter Giles, "and in my garden upon a bench covered with green bowes we sat down talking together." The travels of Raphael were no common travels. "Nothing is more easy to be found," he says, "than baiting Scyllas, ravenyng Celenes and Lestrigones, devourers of people, and such-like great and incredible monsters." His travels did not result, like those of Sir J. Mandeville, in the discovery of savage tribes protecting themselves from the sun by their one large multitudinous toed foot, or in the discovery of Eve's apple, or the serpent's tooth. This is common, "but to find citizens ruled by good and wholesome laws, that is an exceeding rare and hard thing." He had, indeed, found many "fond and foolish laws" in these new-found lands, but also many good ones, and "he rehearsed divers acts and constitutions, whereby these our cities and nations may take example to amend their errors."

The extent of his experience and his capacity for expounding it move More's admiration. Surely, he says, "I wonder greatly why you get you not into some king's court. For I am sure there is no prince living who would not be very glad of you as a man not only able to delight him with examples, but help him with counsels. And thus doing you shall bring yourself in a very good case, and also be of ability to help all your friends and kinsfolk . . . and it is the highest way that you can devise to bestow your time fruitfully . . . and this you shall never so well do as if you be of some great prince's counsel." Probably, when these arguments had been urged to More himself he had answered in the same words that he puts into the mouth of Raphael: "You be twice deceived, Master More, first in me and again in the thing itself. For neither is in me the ability that you force upon me, and if it were never so much, yet in disquieting mine own quietness, I should nothing further the weal public. For first of all, the most part of all princes have more delight in warlike matters and feats of chivalry (the knowledge whereof I neither have nor desire) than in the good feats of peace, and employ much more study how by right or by wrong to enlarge their dominions, than how well and peaceable to rule and govern that they have already." In England the social confusion which was the result of such policy was then at its height, and was only increased by the remedies applied. The King, anxious to recover what he called "his very true patrimony," had spent three years in active warfare. In the years 1512, 1513, 1514, the revenues of more than twelve ordinary years had

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been paid away, the hoards of Henry VII. had been squandered. "In 1515 even the subservient commons showed symptoms of discontent; they complained that whereas the King's noble progenitor had maintained his estate and the defence of the realm out of the ordinary revenue of the kingdom, he now, by reason of the improvident grants made by him since he came to the throne, had not sufficient revenue left to meet his increasing expenses. All unusual grants of annuities were declared void, and in the coming year an income-tax of sixpence, descending even to farm-labourers, was to be twice repeated in order to cover arrears. This Parliament endeavoured also to interfere with the wages of the labouring class, solely for the benefit of the employers of labour. The drain upon the labour-market for the supply of soldiers had caused a rise in wages: the last Parliament had attempted to re-enact the old statute of labourers; this Parliament repeated the Act. Again, the scarcity of labour made itself felt by the tendency of landowners to throw arable land into pasture, involving sudden and cruel ejection of thousands of peasantry. This was in part checked, but it was always possible for landowners to evade the check by compounding with the King." The result of all this was increase of crime, increase of executions among the lower classes; while the luxury and extravagance of the upper classes grew, stimulated and encouraged by the influence of Italy. At the table of Cardinal Morton, Raphael says, the conversation had turned on the social evils of the day, and he had given it as his opinion that any conscientious minister, anxious for the welfare of his country, must, if he wished to improve the state of the country, check his sovereign in his fatal desire for war. All social reforms for their success must depend on the King's relinquishment of his schemes of ambition. The remedies suggested by him for improving the condition of the lower classes, and reducing the vagabond element, were also on the principle that prevention is the best cure; the engrossings of the rich must be restrained, fewer persons bred up in idleness, tillage-farming must be restored, honest employment found for thieves. There is no use, he says, in severe laws: they never can work any reform, not going to the root of the matter; capital punishment is in itself a sin. "God commands us that we shall not kill." It is doubly wrong to impose death for a small offence. Even Moses's law only punished theft by purse and not by death. "All the goods in the world are not able to countervail a man's life." But, says Raphael, supposing I took office and suggested to the King that the example of the Achorians should

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be followed, who under similar circumstances (their king desiring to conquer and govern another nation) refused to be governed by half a king, and insisted that their king should choose which of the two kingdoms he should govern, how would such counsel be received? Also supposing when the question of taxes was raised, "one proposing to tamper with the currency, another the pretence of immediate war and then declaration of peace, a third the exaction of penalties under old obsolete statutes, a fourth the prohibition of such things as are against the public interest, and the granting of licenses for sums of money, a fifth the securing of judges on the side of the royal prerogative,—how if I should come and say that all these counsels were pernicious, that if a king cannot do without these means he had better abdicate, that he must put aside sloth and pride, live on his own revenue, accommodate expenditure to income, restrain crime, preventing it by good laws rather than punish it." "These and such other informations, if I should use among men wholly inclined and given to the contrary part, how deaf hearers, think you, should I have."

Thus the first book concludes with an expression of the hopelessness of attempting reform.

In the second book More, through the mouth of Raphael Hythloday, describes his ideal of a Commonwealth, and makes the description the vehicle of satire on contemporary customs and institutions. As Mr. Seebohm says, "this method of criticism was a safe one, for to object in any way to the *Utopia* was to admit the truth of its insinuations." He had thus chosen as ingenious a method for expressing his views, as Erasmus had through the mouth of Folly. In More's descriptions of the customs and of the political and intellectual life of the Utopians is intended that satire which comes from the direct contrast of the ideal with the actual. Politically, the government of the Utopians is democratic: every thirty families elect them yearly an officer called a syphograunte or a philarche, chosen from the learned class, and exempted legally from labour, but not availing themselves of this privilege, to the intent to give a good example. Every syphograunte, with his thirty families, is under an officer called the chief philarche or tranibore, chosen yearly, but not lightly deposed. The prince is elected by the syphograuntes, who number 200; they choose from among four men, who have been selected by the people for this object. The prince holds his office all his lifetime unless he is deposed for "suspicion" of tyranny. "The tranibores, every third day, and sometimes oftener if need be, come into the

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Council House with the king: they take with them two syphograuntes, whom they change each time; and nothing touching the Commonwealth shall be confirmed or ratified unless it have been debated three days in the Council before it be decreed. It is death to have any consultation for the Commonwealth out of the Council." In the course of the debate syphograuntes are consulted, who again consult their families, and when they have consulted they tell the decision to the Council. This sketch of self-government in Utopia implied a severe criticism on the action of the Tudor kings; on the long and frequent intervals in the summoning of Parliament; its packed composition when it was summoned; its coercion if it was not servile enough to meet the caprice of the king; the utter disregard with which he treated not only the popular voice in political affairs, but the opinion of Parliament and of his ministers. Nowhere is there a better illustration of the importance and power of the caprice of kings than in the history of the Tudor despotism. More indeed wrote before the Reformation, before the Act of Supremacy; but the way in which the Reformation, this supremely important legal and ecclesiastical movement, was brought about to gratify the whim of the king in love with a pretty maid of honour, is but characteristic of Henry's general policy. But in Utopia everything was to be subordinate to the welfare of the people. The prince was general superintendent of the life of the people, with great controlling but no despotic power. The local officers seem to have had most to do; it is they "who take care that no man sit idle; that every one apply himself with earnest diligence; and yet that no one is to be wearied from early in the morning till late in the evening with continual work, like labouring and toiling beasts." If Utopian human nature were at all stubborn, or inclined to have its own way, it is they who would have had to deal with it.

Their economic arrangements are as befits a people so despotically democratic. Property is held entirely in common, not only property in land, but all worldly possessions. The doors of the houses have no locks or bolts; "whoso will may go in, for there is nothing within the houses that is private or any man's own;" every tenth year they change their houses by lot; and only in the matter of gardening is there a slight field allowed for the exercise of the spirit of competition. "Their studie and diligence herein cometh not only of pleasure but of a certain strife and contention that is between street and street concerning the trimming, husbanding, and furnishing of the gardens." In

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all other points a deadly uniformity is aimed at. The five cities of the island, large and fair, agreeing in tongue, manners, institutions, and laws, "are all set and situate alike, and in all points fashioned alike." Each city has never less than thirty miles of ground, and in the country round it each city has houses or farms built, well appointed, and furnished with tools; every house having forty persons, men and women, and two bondmen. Every thirty farms or families have one head ruler, who sees that all work sufficiently, save those who are too weak or ill, or in some other way unqualified or exempted, as are those who belong to the learned class. Life is to be diversified by the regular interchange of inhabitants between town and country. Out of every family in the city twenty persons are sent, and the vacancies are filled up by inhabitants from the country. "No man," Raphael says, "is constrained to leave the town;" but the Utopians have such well-regulated minds that they like everything that it is proper for them to do, and "most have great pleasure and delight in husbandrie." They produce much more than is necessary for the subsistence of the country, "parting the overplus among the borderers." Every man is brought up to his father's craft, unless he shows a decided aptitude for some other. All work only nine hours, and when they have made sufficient store for themselves, "which they think not done until they have provided for the two years following, then of those things whereof they have abundance,—grain, honey, wool, flax, madder, etc.,—they carry forth into other countries great plenty; and the seventh part of all these things they give frankly and freely to the poor of the country. The residue they sell at a reasonable and meane price. By this trade of traffic they bring into their own country all such things as they lack at home, which is almost nothing but iron. They care not whether they are paid for ready money or else upon trust," and so rich are they "that the most part of it they never ask . . . for that thing which is to them no profit, to take it from others to whom it is profitable, they think it no right or conscience." The purpose of what store they have is to hire mercenaries in case of warlike emergencies.

All economic law and reason is reversed by the Utopians with reference to gold and silver: they give an artificial inferiority to gold, "by all means possible procuring to have gold and silver among them in reproach and infamy, making it the plaything of their children, the fetters of their criminals;" and Raphael illustrates this point and the success of their custom by "the

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very pleasant tale of the ambassadors of the Anemolians." The reaction against the wealth that had come in with the Renaissance, the belief that wealth consists entirely in gold and silver,—that to disregard it means to disregard wealth,—is apparent in More's desire to show how the Utopian sets no store by gold or silver.

The international relations of the Utopians are equally singular, but show an equally commendable purpose. "They count it a most just cause of war when any people holdeth a piece of ground void and vacant to no good or profitable use, keeping other men from the use and possession;" they themselves, if they are too numerous, found colonies on what is unemployed, and if resisted, they make it a cause of war. Other causes of war are the defence of their own country, the ejection out of a friend's land of the enemies that have invaded it, or the deliverance from the yoke and bondage of tyranny some people that be therewith oppressed. "They rejoice and avaunt themselves if they vanquish and oppress their enemies by craft and deceit,—that is to say, by the might and puissance of wit, for with bodily strength, say they, bears, lions, wolves, and dogs, and other wild beasts, do fight." They issue proclamations promising great rewards to him that will kill their enemies' princes. If they cannot prevail by raising up internal dissensions, etc., "then they raise up the people that be next neighbours and borderers to their enemies." When they actually do go to war they hire soldiers chiefly of the tribe of Zapolites, a hideous, savage, fierce, and wild tribe living in the mountains, "who maintain their life by seeking their death. . . . And the Utopians like, as they seek good men to use well, so they seek these evil and vicious men to abuse. They believe that they should do a very good deed for all mankind if they could rid out of the world all that foul stinking den of that most wicked and cursed people." As before war they resort to stratagem, so in war they prefer ambushes and stratagems to open fighting, hoping thus to prevent loss of life. "Engines for war they devise, and invent wonders wittily," holding that the severer the rules and the weapons of war the less barbarous it is, since it makes people think twice before entering on it, and when once begun it is soonest over. Truces for a short time "they do firmly and faithfully keep; leagues they never make. . . . For what purpose serve leagues, say they, as though nature had not set sufficient love between man and man; and whoso regardeth not nature, think you that he will pass for words?" Then follows a passage of

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that clumsy satire which consists in saying exactly the opposite of what is meant. Raphael speaks in exaggerated praise of the international morality of Europe: "For here in Europe, and especially in those parts where the faith and religion of Christ reigneth, the majestie of leagues is everywhere esteemed holy and inviolable, partly through the justice and goodness of princes, and partly at the reverence and motion of the head bishop;" and concludes with words showing that his idea of international intercourse was indeed Utopian in the sense of being unattainable. "The Utopians think that the fellowship of nature be a strong league, and that men be better and more surely knit together by love and benevolence than by covenants and leagues, by hearty affection of mind than by words." The federation of the world is Utopian in the nineteenth century: what must it not have been then in the sixteenth?

The description of the intellectual and moral condition of the Utopians is the most interesting part of the book. Raphael says, "How much more wit is in the heads of the Utopians than of the common sort of Christians; . . . in the exercise and study of the mind they be never weary; they have a wonderful aptness for learning; in less than three years' space there was nothing in the Greek tongue they lacked." As no man in Utopia labours to excess, there is always for every one time to spend in learning. Both men and women are encouraged to attend lectures; no one is compelled, but a certain inducement is given by the fact that those who distinguish themselves by capacity and industry are placed in a learned class exempt from work,—a class from which the syphograuntes and other officers of dignity are chosen. "They be taught learning in their own native tongue, for it is both copious in words and pleasant to the ear, and for the utterance of a man's mind very perfect and sure." He compares their learning with that of the ancients. In music, logic, arithmetic, and geometry, they have found out in a manner all that our ancient philosophers have taught. Then follows "a nipping taunt." But, he says, they have not devised one of all those rules of restrictions, complications, and suppositions very wittily invented in the small logicals which here our children in every place do learn. They were never yet able to find out the second intentions, *i.e.* "the terms which express the modes in which the mind regards the first intention;" in other words, they made no attempt to realise the essence of the thing apart from the thing itself; "none of them all could ever see man in common, as they call him, though he be (as you know) bigger than ever was a giant,

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and pointed to even with our finger." Thus More takes revenge on those who had attempted to teach him to distinguish the essence of man, "man in common," apart from the individual man. The Utopians lose themselves in no mystic astrological knowledge; "the amities and dissensions of the planets and all that deceitful divination of the stars they never as much as dreamed thereof." They love, indeed, to contemplate nature, and the marvellous and gorgeous frame of the world; they study the human frame, and think much of the science of physic, but all superstitious learning, and all barren and contentious learning, they utterly contemn. But it is in philosophy that they chiefly exercise their minds. "They dispute of the good qualities of the soul and of the body and of fortune . . . they reason of virtue and pleasure. Felicity is the end of life, and felicity includes every motion or state of the mind wherein man hath naturally delectation." They judge it extreme madness to follow sharp and painful virtue, and not only to banish the pleasure of life, but also willingly to suffer grief without any hope of profit thereof ensuing . . . they count divers kinds of pleasures, some of the soul, some of the body. To the soul they give intelligence and that delectation that cometh of the contemplation of truth. The pleasure of the body they divide into two parts. The first is when delectation is sensibly felt and perceived. The second part of bodily pleasure, they say, is that which consisteth and resteth in the quiet and upright state of the body. The pleasures of the mind are superior to those of the body, and the chief part of these pleasures they think "doth come of the exercise of virtue and conscience of good life." It is a sin to sacrifice a greater pleasure for a smaller; the pleasure of others is to be regarded as important as our own, and in taking our pleasure we must always consider that we do not give others displeasure; also to draw something from self to give to others is a point of humanity and gentleness which never taketh away so much commodity which it bringeth,—the conscience of a good deed giving the highest pleasure to the mind. Thus the philosophy of the Utopians, which opens with pagan and epicurean maxims, is brought round to the standard of Christian ethics. More has reconciled the Christian and pagan ideals by a course of reasoning which appealed to his sympathetic mind. But against the doctrine of asceticism the Utopians set their face; "for it is to the wealth and profit of no man to punish himself, to the intent he may be able courageously to suffer adversitie, which perchance shall never come to him . . . they do think it (asceticism) a

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point of extreme madness, and a token of a man cruelly-minded towards himself and unkind towards nature, as one so disdaining to be in her favour, that he renounceth and refuseth all her benefits." But More shows a certain tenderness towards those who spend their lives in good works, despising worldly ties. Thus, in speaking of the two sects who devote their lives to good works, one mixing with the world, the other not, he calls the first the wiser, the second the holier.

The intellectual condition of the Utopians being thus cultivated, it follows that there was great diversity and great toleration in their religion. All agree in believing that there is one chief and principal God, the maker and ruler of the whole world, called by different names, but all designating according to different conceptions that certain godly power, "unknown, everlasting, incomprehensible, inexplicable, far above the capacity and reach of man's wit, dispersed throughout all the world, not in bigness, but in virtue and power. . . . Every man has choice and free liberty to believe what he would: savyng that he (Kyng Utopus, the founder of this Commonwealth) earnestly and straitly charged them that no man should conceive so ill and base an opinion of the dignitie of man's nature, as to think that the soules do die and perish with the body, or that the world runneth at all aventures governed by no divine providence." "If such an unbeliever there be, he is excluded from all honours." "Howbeit they put him to no punishment, because they be persuaded that it is in no man's power to believe what he list." On these broad principles were the lives of the Utopians modelled, and we see them, an excellent yet somewhat dull people, living their wholesome and ordered life, "in the present sight and under the eyes of every man," dining together in large halls at the set hours of dinner and supper. The women cook and seethe and dress the meat, and at table the elders with their sage gravity keep the younger from wanton license of words and behaviour, while they divide the dainties as they think best to those young ones on each side of them. Dinner and supper begin with the reading of something that pertaineth to good manners and virtue; afterwards harmless luxuries are indulged in, "concettis" and junkets, with the burning of sweet gums and spices and perfumes.

While the Utopians are at work they are dressed in leather or skins that will last seven years. When they go abroad they wear a cloak which hides their homely apparel. This cloak is all of one colour, which is the natural colour of the wool. In linen cloth they have regard only to whiteness, in woollen only

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to cleanliness. They would think attention spent on their clothes, on the material, colour, and fashioning of the same, a waste of strength; "they prefer to withdraw from bodily service to the free liberty of the mind and the garnishing of the same." They despise counterfeit pleasures, foolish honours, vain nobility; they spend little in ornament, delighting as much in imitation as in genuine precious stones, thinking that the opinion and fancy of people doth augment and diminish the price and estimation of precious stones.

The plays and games of the sensible people are also profitable. After supper they bestow one hour in play: some exercise themselves in music, some in a favourite game, which is a sort of chess, where vices fight with virtues, "in which game is very properly showed both the strife and discord that vices have among themselves, and again their unity and concord against virtue." Of hunting as a pastime they have no opinion; they call it the vilest of all pastimes, for they believe that animals have immortal souls, and they therefore think it as wrong to take away their life as they would the life of any human being. The Utopians have much humanity, but no superstitious reverence for life; they would even countenance the custom of Euthanasia, condemned by many of the modern world. They think it right for a man to end his life, if it is humanly certain that it must be spent in pain and disease. Only bondmen are allowed to be butchers. "For they permit not their free citizens to accustom themselves to the killing of beasts, through the use whereof they think clemency, the gentlest affection of our nature, by little and little to decay and perish."

"I must nedes confess and grant," says Raphael in conclusion, "that many things be in the Utopian weal public which in our own cities I may rather wish for than hope after," and it is a confirmation of his opinion that the word Utopian has been adopted into the English language as signifying the desired but the unattainable.

Sir Philip Sidney approving, as he must needs do, of a book that has for aim "to teach virtue by feigning," yet cannot help implying that he thinks the *Utopia* a failure; the dull, uniform life which it describes being to him no ideal. Indeed, excellent and praiseworthy as these people are in their views and ways, their life is oppressive and monotonous. We feel that the Utopian would die out,—that their uniform, regulated existence would produce the passive type, not the energetic active type which is essential to progress, and which is nourished on diversity.

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More's *Utopia* is indeed duller than the ideal of the severest socialist; it is a picture of the stationary state which leaves nothing to be hoped for, in all senses of the term. The book is itself charming because it reveals the simplicity, delicacy, and refinement of the mind that wrote it; it is at all times a most efficient vehicle for satire—on the tyranny and despotism of the king, on the luxury and idleness of the nobility, on the frightful international immorality of Europe, caused by the caprice and ambition of kings careless of human life, on religion and science alike fruitless and barren, careless of result in practice, on the absence of toleration, on the extravagance, carelessness, and irresponsibility of the upper classes—but the society of which it gives a picture is a most unstimulating ideal; its healthy, comfortable, completely regulated life could only nourish mediocrity.

PART III.—*Its Work in Education.*

ASCHAM, Roger, *b.* 1515; studies at St. John's College, Cambridge; made public orator; appointed Latin secretary and classical tutor to Princess Elizabeth, 1554; *d.* 1568.—*Toxophilus* written, 1544.—*The Schoolmaster* published, 1570.

A review of the New Learning would not be at all complete without noticing what was perhaps its greatest practical achievement, viz. its educational work. Apart from the general stimulus which it gave to thought and intellectual life, it made a very definite reform by supplanting the old system of education, invented and conducted by the Schoolmen, by a new system making classics the foundation and the aim of all education, and employing a more humane and gentle method in the process of instilling them into the pupil. It is this system—first originated when the classics alone represented humanism as opposed to scholasticism—that has held its ground to our own day. It is only now being gradually modified by that view which conceives other subjects to be of equal value as training, and of greater value as a preparation, for the business of life.

In 1510 Colet had founded St. Paul's School. It was his intention that in this school should be taught good literature, both Latin and Greek. The works of such authors "as have with wisdom joined pure chaste eloquence," specially Christian authors who wrote their "wisdom in clean and chaste Latin, whether in prose or verse." "My interest in this school," he said, "is specially to increase the knowledge and the wor-

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shipping of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and good Christian life and manners, to the children." In this school Latin and Greek were made the elements of education, and the process of teaching was conducted with mildness and gentleness, instead of with that roughness and severity which teachers on the scholastic method had thought it necessary to employ in order to prepare youth for a life, which in these ages was but a painful and weary struggle, in which the only virtues were endurance and self-sacrifice. Thus youth from the beginning must be trained to endure pain. Erasmus, in a work written to expose and hold up to public scorn the private schools of his time, including those of monasteries and colleges, to which parents as a matter of course sent their children, tells a story which illustrates the nature of the discipline every right-minded teacher considered it necessary to employ. "I once knew a divine, a man of reputation, who seemed to think that no cruelty to scholars could be enough, since he never would have any but flogging masters. He thought this was the only way to crush the boys' unruly spirits and to subdue the wantonness of their age. Never did he take a meal with his flock without making the comedy end in tragedy, so at the end of the meal one or another boy was dragged out to be flogged. . . . I myself was once by, when after dinner as usual he called out a boy, I should think about ten years old. He had only just come fresh from his mother to school. His mother, it should be said, was a poor woman, and had specially commended the boy to him. But he at once began to charge the boy with unruliness, since he could think of nothing else, and must find something to flog him for, and made signs to the proper official to flog him. Whereupon the poor boy was forthwith flogged then and there, and flogged as though he had committed sacrilege. The divine turned round to me and said, 'he did nothing to deserve it, but the boy's spirit must be subdued.'"

The boys in Colet's school were to be drawn to study by liking and inclination, and if there was ever any possibility of confounding Colet with the divine of whom Erasmus told the story, this possibility must be removed by the preface which Colet wrote to his little Latin grammar. It was this grammar which superseded Linacre's, and which, with additions made by Erasmus and Lilly, was ultimately known as *Lilly's Grammar*. In writing this little book Colet said that he had studied clearness and simplicity above all: "Judging that nothing may be too soft nor too familiar for little children specially learning a tongue with them at all strange; in which little book I have left

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many things out on purpose, considering the tenderness and capacity of small minds. . . . Wherefore I pray you all, little babes, all little children, learn gladly this little treatise and commend it diligently unto your memories, trusting of this beginning ye shall proceed and grow to perfect literature, and come at the last to be great clerks. And lift up your little white hands for me, which prayeth for you to God, to whom be all honour and imperial majesty and glory."

Colet also endeavoured to raise the position of those who taught, and Erasmus explains what was the high ideal held by the school of the New Learning, with regard to the duties of this profession. "In order that the teacher might be thoroughly up to his work, he should not merely be a master of one particular branch of study. He should himself have travelled through the whole circle of knowledge. In philosophy he should have studied Plato and Aristotle, Theophrastus and Plotinus; in theology the Sacred Scriptures, and after them Origen, Chrysostom, and Basil among the Greek fathers, and Ambrose and Jerome among the Latin fathers; among the poets, Homer and Ovid; in geography, which is very important in the study of history, Pomponius, Mela, Ptolemy, Pliny, Strabo. He should know what ancient names of rivers and mountains, countries, cities, answer to the modern ones; and the same of trees, animals, instruments, clothes, and gems, with regard to which it is incredible how ignorant even educated men are. He should take note of little facts about agriculture, architecture, military and culinary acts, mentioned by different authors. He should be able to trace the origin of words, their gradual corruption in the languages of Constantinople, Italy, and France. Nothing should be beneath his observation which can illustrate history or the meaning of poets." It is not known whether this ideal was realised by Lilly, the grammarian, the godson of Grocyn, who had learnt Latin in Italy, Greek in the East, who had travelled to Jerusalem, and Rhodes, but he it was who was chosen to be headmaster of Colet's school. He was without doubt one of the most cultivated men of his time, and Colet, duly acknowledging the value of his services, gave him a salary of £35 a year, a sum which meant a great deal in those days, when the value of money was so much greater than it is now; the occupant of the most dignified post in the kingdom, the Lord Chancellor, only receiving £133 a year, including the perquisites of his office.

Colet and Erasmus, in exalting the dignity of the teaching

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profession, had, however, to struggle against much prejudice. Even when Bacon, in the seventeenth century, published *The Advancement of Learning*, the importance of the profession had not been thoroughly vindicated. One of the aspersions cast by the prejudice of the time on learned men was that they occupied themselves with the meanest of all employments, the education of youth. "But how unjust this traducement is (if you will reduce things from popularity of opinion to measure of reason) may appear in that we see, men are more curious what they put into a new vessel than into a vessel seasoned, and what mould they lay about a young plant than about a plant corroborate, so as the weakest terms and times of all things use to have the best applications and helps." But "things" at the time of the New Learning had not been reduced even by cultivated minds to "measure of reason." Erasmus, when Professor of Greek at Cambridge, helped Colet to find an undermaster for his school. He relates a conversation he had with a divine of the University. "Who," said this divine, "would put up with the life of a schoolmaster if he could get a living in any other way?" Erasmus replied that he thought the education of youth one of the most honourable of all callings; "there can be no labor more pleasing to God than the Christian training of boys." The divine replied: "If any one wants to give himself up entirely to Christ let him go into a monastery. He must leave all worldly ties and duties and follow Christ," he continued, ignoring Erasmus's reminder that St. Paul places true religion in works of charity: "in forsaking all is found alone the true perfection of Christianity." "He can scarcely be said to leave all," returned Erasmus, "who, when he has a chance of doing good to others, refuses the task because it is too humble in the eyes of the world." And thus having had the last word, and "lest," as he says, "I should get into a quarrel, I bade the man good-bye."

Colet's school became popular and flourishing, supported almost entirely by Colet's money. It succeeded in spite of those who marked it as a dangerous place, where was taught "heretical Greek." Colet is remarkable among liberal founders as having had respect for the changing circumstances of the future, and having left great discretionary liberty to those that came after him in the disposal of funds and in the organisation of the school. "Notwithstanding these statutes and ordinances before written in which I have declared my mind and will: yet because in time to come many things may and shall survive and grow by many occasions and causes which by the making

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of this book was not possible to come to mind, trusting in the assured truth and circumspect wisdom and faithful goodness of the most honest and substantial fellowship of the mercery of London. . . . Both all this that is said, and all that is not said which hereafter shall come into my mind while I live to be said, I leave it wholly to their discretion and charity." But the work of Colet remained, altered only in details by posterity; his views on education, both as to subject and to method, remained those of posterity for three centuries.

A work which expounds the literary views of the New Learning is one of the first prose works written in English which appeared at the beginning of the Renaissance. Although Roger Ascham was not born till 1515, and although the *Schoolmaster* was not published till 1570, after his death, yet his book may be considered a representative work of the New Learning, so thoroughly does it reflect the educational views of Colet and Erasmus, its aim being merely to put them into a popular form. Ascham had come before the public as an author in 1545, when he presented his *Toxophilus*, written in 1544, to the King. This book in its subject and in its style showed direct traces of the stimulus of the Renaissance. It illustrates not only the interest taken in physical culture, but also the healthy impulse that classic culture had given to the cultivation of the native tongue. In the preface Ascham says that "he wishes to be read by all the gentlemen and yeomen of England." He wishes to show that the art of writing in English prose can be an art as well as writing in Latin or Greek. There can be the same scholarly care, the same choice and ordering of words. "He that will write well in any tongue must follow the counsel of Aristotle; to speak as the common people do, and to think as wise men do, and so should every man understand him, and the judgment of wise men allow him." The book consists of two books of dialogue between Philologus and Toxophilus,—the first book containing several arguments to commend shooting, the second a particular description of the art of shooting with the long-bow. Ascham, in the treatment of his subject, shows that he was no mediæval mystic, holding that the soul shone more brightly and purely in a thin and emaciated body, looking out of sunken and hollow eyes. But physical culture, Ascham allowed, is only one side of life: it is only one of the many requirements of the human being. "Shooting," he says, "should be a waiter and not a master over learning;" it is but a recreation,—a necessary one, for the man who would be healthily developed,—but merely a

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recreation, in no sense an aim in life. But it is much superior to music, he says, for "music maketh a man's wit so soft, so tender, so smooth, so quaisie, that he is less able to brook strong and tough study." Shooting is upheld on the authority of the classics; and the same support is sought by Ascham when he seeks to justify himself in the eyes of contemporaries for devoting his attention to such a trivial subject as education. "Yet some men, friendly enough of nature, but of small judgment and learning, do think that I take too much pains, spend too much time, in setting forth these children's affairs. But those good men were never brought up in Socrates's school, who saith plainly, 'that no man goeth about a more goodly purpose than he that is mindful of the good bringing up both of his own and other men's children.'" "This last summer," he says, "I was in a gentleman's house where a young child somewhat past four years old could in no wise frame his tongue to say a little short grace, and yet he could roundly rap out so many ugly oaths, and those of the newest fashion, as some good man of fourscore years old hath never heard named before: and that which was most detestable of all, his father and mother would laugh at it. I much doubt what comfort an other day this child shall bring unto them. . . . And," he goes on to say, "it may be a great wonder but a greater shame to us Christian men to understand what a heathen writer Isocrates doth leave in memory of writing, concerning the care that the noble city of Athens had to bring up their youth in honest company and virtuous discipline, whose talk in Greek is to this effect in English."

Isocrates tells how the city was not more careful to see their young men well taught as well governed; he describes the care they had to spread sound learning and to cultivate good manners among the youth; he recounts the learned men that distinguished Athens, the illustrious practical men the city brought forth. "And now," says Ascham, "let Italian, and Latin itself, Spanish, French, Dutch, and English, bring forth their learning and recite their authors, Cicero only excepted, and one or two more in Latin; they be all patched clouts and rags in comparison of fair woven broadcloth. . . . The remembrance of such a Commonwealth, using such discipline and order for youth, and thereby bringing forth to their praise, and leaving to us for our example such captains for war, such counsellors for peace, and matchless masters for all kinds of learning, is pleasant for me to recite, and not irksome, I trust, for others to hear, except it be such as make neither count of virtue and learning." To those

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who respect the true dignity of learning he need not apologise for this work, which deals with the right bringing up of youth, —first, with the method by which it may be most easily drawn to learning; secondly, with the best modes of learning the classic tongues. He advocates mildness and praise in the teaching of youth for several reasons—first, it is an inducement to learning; it is better than that beating and severity which the Schoolmen thought was the only means by which the child might be driven to learn. "And one example, whether love or fear doth work more in a child, for virtue and learning, I will gladly report, which may be heard with some pleasure and followed with more profit. Before I went into Germany I came to Brodegate in Leicestershire, to take my leave of that noble Lady Jane Grey, to whom I was exceeding much beholding. Her parents, the Duke and the Duchess, with all the household, gentlemen and gentlewomen, were hunting in the park; I found her in her chamber, reading Phædon Platonis in Greek, and that with as much delight as some gentleman would read a merry tale in Boccaccio. After salutation and duty done, with some other talk, I asked her why she would lose such pastime in the park? Smiling she answered me, I wisse all these sports is but a shadow to that pleasure that I find in Plato: alas, good folk, they never felt what the pleasure meant! And how came you, madam, quoth I, to this deep knowledge of pleasure, and what did chiefly allure you unto it, seeing not many women, but very few men, have attained thereunto? 'I will tell you,' quoth she, 'and tell you a troth which perchance ye will marvel at. One of the greatest benefits that ever God gave me is that he sent me so sharp and severe parents and so gentle a schoolmaster. For when I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, stand or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sowyng, playing, dancing, or doing anything else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfectly, as God made the world, or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently sometimes with pinches, nippes, and bobbes, and other ways which I will not name, for the honor I bear them, so without measure misordered that I think myself in hell, till time come that I must go to Mr. Elmer, who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping because whatsoever I do else but learning is full of grief, trouble, fear, and whole misliking unto me: and thus my book

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hath been so much my pleasure and bringeth daily to me more pleasure and more, that in respect of it, all other pleasures in very deed be but trifles and troubles unto me.' I remember this talk gladly, both because it is so worthy of memory, and because also it was the last talk that ever I had, and the last time that ever I saw, that noble and worthy lady."

If severity, says Ascham, is used indiscriminately, the child is punished when not actually in fault, and the sense of this injustice is one of the most bitter griefs of childhood, and likely to spoil the best of natures. Then again, by severity the quickest and roughest wits are often rewarded, and these quick and rough wits have by no means the best natures, and indeed, success in life is often attained best by those who have slow wits yet solid: "hard solid kind of wits often prove the best in every kind of life."

When Ascham considers what best qualifies a child for learning, we see how the ideal of the scholar has changed. The scholar of the Canterbury tales—

> "Was not right fat, I undertake
> And loked holwe and thereto soberly."
> . . . . . .

According to Ascham it is the full development of body and of mind that best qualifies the human being for learning. "Euphues is he that is apt by goodness of wit and applicable by readiness of will to learning, having all other qualities of the mind and parts of the body that must another day serve learning, not troubled, mangled, and halved, but sound, full, whole, and able to do their office; as a tongue not stammering or ever hardly drawing forth words, but plain and ready to deliver the meaning of the mind: a voice not soft, weak, piping, womanish, but audible, strong, and manlike: a countenance not werish or crabbed, but fair and comely, a personage not wretched and deformed, but tall and goodly: for surely a lovely countenance with a goodly stature giveth credit to learning and authority to the person. . . . And how can a comely body be better employed than to serve the greatest exercise of God's greatest gift, and that is learning." Then, supported by the authority of Plato and Socrates, he enumerates memory, love of learning, desire to work and will to take pains, gladness to learn of others, boldness in asking of questions, love of approbation, as desirable qualities in the child who would be successful in intellectual life. "Plato maketh it (memory) a separate and perfect note of itself:" the

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test of a good memory consists in three properties; it must be quick in receiving, sure in keeping, and ready in delivering forth again. "Isocrates did cause to be written at the entry of the school, in golden letters, this golden sentence, 'If thou lovest learning thou shalt attain to much learning.' . . . Aristotle uttered these words in his *Rhetorike ad Theodecten*,—Liberty kindleth love, love refuseth no labour, and labour obtaineth whatsoever it seeketh; and Socrates added the fifth note: that a man must not always trust to his own singular wit; he must be glad to hear and learn of another. For otherwise he shall stick with great trouble where he might go easily forward, and also catch hardly a very little by his own toil, when he might gather quickly a great deal by any other man's teaching. . . . And Socrates wisely adds the sixth note, and that is, a natural boldness to ask any question, desirous to search out any doubt; not ashamed to learn of the meanest, not afraid to go to the greatest, until he be perfectly taught and fully satisfied; and lastly, he must have a mind wholly bent to win praise by so doing." "These," says Ascham, "be no questions asked by Socrates, as doubts; but these be sentences first affirmed by Socrates as mere trothes, and afterwards given forth by Socrates as right rules most necessary to be marked, and fit to be followed by all them that could have taught as they should." And he adds, with great decision, "In this counsel, judgement, and authority of Socrates I will repose myself, until I meet with a man of the contrary mind whom I may justly take to be wiser than I think Socrates was." Ascham then goes on to treat of another point necessary to the well bringing up of youth. "I wished before to have love of learning bred up in children; I wish as much now to have young men brought up in good order of living, and in some more severe discipline than now commonly they be;" and on this point the excellent Ascham, although he brings the greatest authorities of the age to support him, does not recommend himself as so sensible to modern minds as he did in the first part of his treatise. "Erasmus, the honor of learning of all our time, said wisely that experience is the common schoolhouse of fools and ill men." Ascham thinks that good precepts of learning "be the eyes of the mind, to look wisely before a man, which way to go right and which not." To him life in the world was a simple matter, and the science of conduct consisted in a few precepts gathered from learning which would act as a sort of charm and keep the man from evil ways. "Before entering on the world a man must be diligently instructed in precepts of well-doing. . . . He hazardeth sore that waxeth

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wise by experience. An unhappy master is he that is made cunning by many shipwrecks . . . and surely he that would prove wise by experience, he may be witty in deed; but even like a swift runner that runneth fast out of his way, and upon the night, he knoweth not whither. . . . And look well upon the former life of those few, whether your example be old or young, who without learning have gathered by long experience a little wisdom and some happiness: and when you do consider, what mischief they have committed, what dangers they have escaped (and yet twenty for one do perish in the adventure), then think well with yourself whether ye would that your own son should come to wisdom and happiness by the way of such experience or no." Ascham's advice is that fathers, having diligently instructed their sons in the good precepts of life which can be found in learning, opinions, and moral maxims, probably of some great authority of the classic world, should keep them in moral leading-strings till such time as their age or their circumstances rendered them unsusceptible to or undesirous of the teaching of experience. In old times "a young gentleman was never free to go where he would, and do what he list himself, but under the kepe and by the counsell of some grave governor, until he was either married, or called to bear some office in the Common wealth. . . . And see the great obedience that was used in old times to fathers and governors. Even Cyrus the Great, after he had conquered Babylon and subdued rich King Crœsus, would not marry at his uncle's invitation without asking leave from his father: but 'our time is so far from that old discipline and obedience, as now, not only young gentlemen, but even very girls dare without fear, though not without open shame, where they list and how they list, marry themselves in spite of fathers, mothers, God, good order, and all.'" The cause of this evil is "that youth is least looked into, when they stand most need of good keep and regard. It availeth not to see them well taught in young years, and after when they come to lust and youthful days to give them licence to live as they lust themselves." And on this point Ascham is eloquent. He bewails the degeneracy of noblemen's sons. "For wisdom and virtue there be many fair examples in this court for young gentlemen to follow . . . but young gentlemen are fain commonlie to do in court as young archers do in the field, that is take such marks as be nigh them although they be never so foul to shoot at. I mean, they be driven to keep company with the worst: and what force ill company hath, to corrupt good wits the wisest men know best." In the youth of to-day,

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says Ascham, error and phantasy have taken the place of truth and judgment: innocence and ignorance of ill are called rudeness and gracelessness. The chief and greatest grace of all, is to dare to do any mischief, to contemn stoutly any goodness, to be busy in every matter, to be skilful in everything, to acknowledge no ignorance at all; to be always in the fashion, no matter what it be. "And if some Smithfield ruffian take up some strange going: some new mowing with the mouth: some wrenching with the shoulder: some brave proverb: some fresh new oath, that is not stale but will run round in the mouth: some new disguised garment: a desperate hat, fond in fashion or garish in colour, whatsoever it cost, how small soever his living be, by what shift soever it be gotten, gotten must it be and used with the first, or else the grace of it is stale and gone." And the bad habits and tendencies of youth are intensified by the practice they have of travelling into Italy. "I was once in Italy myself: but I thank God," says Ascham, with great *naïveté*, "my abode there was but nine days. . . . Virtue once made that country, mistress over all the world. Vice now maketh that country slave to them, that before were glad to serve it. . . . Italy now is not that Italy it was wont to be: and therefore now not so fit a place, as some do count it for young men to fetch either wisdom or honestie from thence." Ascham, in the nine days that he had spent there, had seen "in that little time, in one city, more liberty to sin than ever I heard tell of in our noble city of London in nine years." Italy is like Circe's court: many "being mules and horses before they went, returned very asses and swine home again: yet everywhere very foxes with subtle and busy heads: and where they may, very wolves with cruel, malicious hearts." "The Italians say: 'Englese Italianeto e un diabolo incarnato,' that is to say, you remain men in shape and fashion, but become devils in life and condition. . . . And now choose you, you Italian-Englishmen, whether you will be angry with us for calling you devils, or else with your own selves that take so much pains and go so far to make yourselves both. If some do not well understand what is an Englishman Italianated I will plainly tell him. He that by living and travelling in Italy bringeth home into England out of Italy, the religion, the learning, the policy, the experience, the manners of Italy. That is to say, for religion, papistry or worse: for learning, less commonly than they carried out with them: for policy, a factious heart, a discoursing head, a mind to meddle in all men's matters: for experience, plenty of new mischieves never known in England before: for manners,

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variety of vanieties and change of filthy living. These be the enchantments of Circe, brought out of Italy to mar men's manners in England." Such was in Ascham's time the current opinion of the influence of Italy—Italy which only a few years ago had been the one source of light and culture to Europe, then struggling under the fetters of the Middle Ages, whose great men had been to the world prophets of knowledge and culture. Ascham of course exaggerates: there was much true culture still in Italy, but it was confined to the few. Italy had no bond of sympathy in the consciousness of a wide, national life, and no belief, either patriotic or religious, which could dignify the smaller city life, and infuse healthiness and a vigour and a sense of large interests into the existence of its citizens. It was Circe's court to the pious Englishman, a place where self-indulgence and the absence of all restraints turned human beings into swine; and the only remedy against its enchantments, "the true medicine against the enchantments of Circe, the vanity of licentious pleasures, the enticements of all sin, is in Homer the herb Móly, with the black root and white flower, sour at the first but sweet in the end: termed by Hesiodus the study of virtue, hard and irksome in the beginning, but in the end easie and pleasant, . . . and the divine poet Homer saith plainly that this medicine against sin and vanity is not found out by man, but given and taught by God."

In the second book Ascham is concerned with the ready way to learn the Latin tongue; and with the comparison of authors, deciding which are best for the training of youth.

Translation, or double translation, paraphrase, expressing the meaning in other words, turning a worse expression into a better, metaphrase, turning verse into prose, or *vice versâ*, epitome or condensation—a good exercise in itself, but bad if it supersede the reading itself—imitation, especially of the best authors, and lastly, declamation,—are all good exercises in the ready way of learning the Latin tongue. "Translation is most commendable and most common in schools: especially is double translation to be recommended, requiring as it does the daily use of writing, which is the only thing that breedeth deep root both in the art for good understanding and in the memory for sure keeping of all that is learned." Ascham is of Bacon's opinion that writing maketh an exact man. "Paraphrase hath good place in learning, but not of mine opinion for any scholar, but is only to be left to a perfect master, either to expound openly a good author withal or to compare privately for his own exercise, how some notable

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piece of an excellent author may be uttered with other fit words. . . "Metaphrase, it were not well to use in grammar schools, even for the self-same causes that be recited against paraphrase . . . it was Socrates' exercise and pastime (as Plato reporteth) when he was in prison to translate Esop's fables into verse. . . . Neither should epitome have place among young scholars in grammar schools: but it is an exercise which may bring much profit to ripe heads and staid judgments: it is good too for those quick inventors and fair ready speakers, who being boldened with their present ability to say more and perchance better do, at the sudden for that present than any other can do, use less help of diligence and study than they ought to do: and so have in them commonly less learning and weaker judgment for all deep considerations than some duller heads and slower tongues have. . . . Imitation is a faculty to express lively and perfectly that example which ye go about to follow: the imitation of the best models is perhaps the best and most natural way to acquire the spirit of a language: of itself it is large and wide: for all the works of nature in a manner be examples for art to follow." Then he considers the models most fit to be followed; "for word and speech Plautus is more plentiful, and Terence more pure and proper. . . . After Plautus and Terence no writing remaineth until Tullus' tyme, except a few short fragments of L. Crassus' excellent wit . . . and 4 men only when the Latin tongue was full ripe be left unto us, who did leave to posterity the fruit of their wit and learning: Varro, Sallust, Cesar, and Cicero. . . . But Varro's, in his books on husbandry, is, compared to Tully, but the talk of a spent old man. Sallust is a wise and worthy writer, but he requireth a learned reader and a right considerer of him. . . . And therefore thus justly I may conclude of Cesar, that where in all others the best that ever wrote, in any time, or in any tongue, in Greek or Latin, I except neither Plato nor Demosthenes nor Tully, some fault is justly noted, in Cesar only could never yet fault be found. . . . A good student must be careful and diligent to read with judgment over even those authors, which did write in the most perfect time: and let him not be afraid to try them both in propriety of words and form of style by the touchstone of Cesar and Cicero, whose purity was never soiled, no, not by the sentence of those that loved them worst."

Both the thought and the expression of Ascham and of More mark them as belonging to the quite early period of the English Renaissance, before the mind had become accustomed to the free exercise of its intellectual faculties, and familiar with the use of

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language—before it was capable of skilfully adapting words to thoughts. The thought of both Ascham and More is marked by strength, earnestness, and simplicity; and these sterling qualities are communicated to their style by the very force, as it were, of their single-heartedness, in thinking everything of the matter and nothing of the form. They are entirely occupied with what they are going to say: they are filled with ideas which are new and striking to them, and which they pour out garrulously and diffusely: they have no conception of the selection and arrangement of thought with a view to bringing out a point: still less have they the idea of studying the proportion of thoughts and the harmony of words with a view to style. Only very faintly can be perceived in their works the beginnings of that self-control and self-criticism in thought and style which mark the great thinker and artist. This is one of the last gifts of culture. The Renaissance had to give first an impetus to thought by stimulating interest in the ideas of others, before it could influence in the direction of study of expression, and could, lastly, encourage that harmony of thought and expression which makes art. The works of the New Learning mark the first phase, the works of the Euphuists and the Courtly Makers the second, and the last includes the productions of the most glorious Elizabethan period, its poems, its dramas, its beginnings of fine prose writing in the works of Hooker and Bacon.

There is sometimes a great charm in the prose of Ascham and of More, and of other writers of this early time, which comes mainly from the sincerity and reality of their feeling, their intense preoccupation with their own thought, and their desire to make others see the same thing in the same light. This earnestness is, as it were, one of the good qualities connected with their defects: it comes from their inability to see the other side of things: it is the strength that some minds possess, because all their energy flows in one current, and is not diffused by many interests and many emotions; but they are deficient in sympathy, making no effort to understand the side to which they are instinctively opposed. Ascham is most impressive in his warning against Italy, a country which he considers an absolute den of unmitigated sin and shame. And the best prose of the time is found in Latimer's sermons, especially in the sermon of the Ploughers, where he inveighs against the sins of his time with all the earnestness of a preacher who feels that there is only one way to salvation, and who is sincerely and honestly grieved at the perverseness of his generation. "Oh London, London, repent, repent,

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for I think God is more displeased with London than ever he was with the city of Nebo. Repent therefore, repent London, and remember that the same God liveth now that punished Nebo, even the same God and none other, and He will punish sin as well now as he did then, and He will punish the iniquity of London as well as he did then of Nebo. . . . And now I would ask a strange question. Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England that passeth all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know him. Who it is I know him well. But now I see you listing and hearkening, that I should name him. There is one that passeth all the other, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you. It is the Devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other: he is never out of his dioceses, he is never from his cure: ye shall never find him unoccupied, he is ever in his parish, he keepeth residence at all times: ye shall never find him out of the way. Call for him when you will, he is ever at home, the diligentest preacher in all the realm, he is ever at his plough, no cording nor lockinge can hinder him, he is ever applying his business: ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kind of popetrie: he is as ready, as can be wished, for to set forth his plough, to devise as many ways as can be to deface and obscure God's glory."

Of this sort of eloquence that comes straight from enthusiasm, earnestness, and sincerity of feeling, there was no lack in those times. The English mind wanted but the widening of thought and feeling, the development of the imagination, the cultivation of sensibility to beauty, whether external or internal, which comes with wider life and wider culture. Its readiness to learn and imitate the example of Italy, the stimulus of a great and exciting national life, served to mature and develop it, till it found its fit expression in the production and enjoyment of that art which marks the great Elizabethan period as the one in which English vitality was at its best and highest.

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CHAPTER III.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ART.

PART I.—*Poetry.—The Company of Courtly Makers.*

WYATT, Thomas, *b.* 1503, *d.* 1542; HOWARD, Henry, Earl of Surrey, prob. *b.* 1517, *d.* 1547; GASCOIGNE, George, *b.* 1536, *d.* 1577; SACKVILLE, Thomas, Lord Buckhurst, *b.* 1536, *d.* 1608; SIDNEY, Sir Philip, *b.* 1544, *d.* 1586; WATSON, Thomas, *b.* about 1557, *d.* 1625; CONSTABLE, Henry, *b.* prob. 1555, *d.* before 1616.

M. TAINE says that the "Renaissance in England was the Renaissance of the Saxon genius;" that what made the glory of the Elizabethan period was the union in its greatest men of the Teutonic earnestness and depth of thought,—of Teutonic and Saxon sensibilities with the Italian and foreign susceptibility to external beauty, to beauty of form, whether physical or literary. The reader of English literature before the Renaissance may notice how absent from the Teutonic genius was this capacity for form, this appreciation of external beauty, and the gift of artistic expression. Our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, who had what Taine calls a very vivid and strong inward representation of the external world, had little facility in expression. Their songs and war-poems are a succession of cries and visions,—no attention is paid even to the sequence of idea and thought; and when we come to later productions of less genius, when the old warlike life, the stimulus to their finest and most heroic emotions, had passed away, and those who wrote were prompted by the crude impulses of an undeveloped national life, we have shapeless poems like Langland's *Piers Plowman*, impressive and sometimes beautiful by mere force of earnestness, but clumsy with their weight of solid purpose; or we have dull productions like Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, where the excellent Teuton, full of moral purpose, treads his French measure with elephantine step. Then at last we have Chaucer, who, as Mr. Lowell says, "shows the first result of the Roman

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yeast on the home-baked Saxon loaf." Chaucer, in his last and English period, gave a prophecy of what English literature might be. In the first periods of his life he had devoted himself to French and Italian models; but, like the great artist he was, he had assimilated their excellence, and, not allowing them to assimilate him or deprive him of his originality, he at last fell back on his own instincts, and produced works which give him a claim to be called "our first national artist." He did indeed

> "Prelude those melodious bursts which fill
> The spacious times of great Elizabeth
> With sounds that echo still."

But Chaucer was much in advance of his age, and before the national mind could enter into possession of that promised land which his genius had reached, it was necessary that it should attain to that appreciation of external form, to that capacity and facility of expression, which is naturally so foreign to the Teutonic genius; that it should undergo some training in this direction; that special encouragement should be given to attention to externals. For a time exaggerated stress must be laid on grace and charm and facility of expression, before English art, whose foundation must of course be the instincts of the English genius, could flourish. And fortunately the stimulus of the Renaissance, with its revival of the classics, with its Italian literary fashions, produced a movement which immediately preceded that of the most glorious age of Elizabethan art, and was to a certain extent its cause. "The Company of Courtly Makers" in the sphere of poetry, the Euphuists in the sphere of prose, represent the school of discipline and training; their primary objects being the imitation of classic and Italian fashion, the study of externals, the worship of form.

"In the latter end of Henry VIII.'s reign," says Puttenham in his *Arte of English Poesie*, "there sprung up a new Company of Courtly Makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyatt the elder, and Henry Earl of Surrey, were the two chieftains, who, having travelled into Italy and there tasted the sweet and stately measures and style of the Italian poesie as novices newly crept out of the schools of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch, they greatly polished our new and homely manner of vulgar poesie from that it had been before, and for that cause may justly be said the first reformers of our English metre and style."

To the "Company of Courtly Makers" may be said to belong Surrey, Wyatt, Vaux, Grimald, Gascoigne, Sackville, and Sidney;

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all writers, whose work, marked by more or less genius, is characterised by studious attention to form, and by thoughts and emotions which are more or less artificial. Sir Philip Sidney stands out from among these men partly because by him the lesson seems better learnt,—it leaves as results capabilities of expression which appear almost as instincts; partly because the larger personality of this "noble and matchless gentleman" is felt in the greater reality and truth of the emotions and the thoughts he expresses. Surrey and Wyatt, the founders of this school, are perhaps its most typical writers. As Mr. Churton Collins says, they have all the spirit of the Early Renaissance, "its classicism, its harmony, its appreciation of form . . . they gave the deathblow to that rudeness, that grotesqueness, that prolixity, that diffuseness, that pedantry, which had deformed with fatal persistency the poetry of mediævalism; and while they purified our language from the gallicisms of Chaucer and his followers, they fixed the permanent standard of our versification. To them we are indebted for the great reform which substituted a metrical for a rhythmical structure." Their writings, and indeed the writings of all those belonging to the same school, are animated by that chivalry of the early Elizabethan times, so ideal and so pure in the grasp of the best minds, so artificial in the grasp of the lower. This chivalry was only another development, purer and intenser, of that mediæval chivalry which animated the troubadours and trouvères; of that chivalry which, regarding the two ideas—honour, and devotion to women—as the inspiration of what is best and highest in life, almost took the place of religion, becoming a strong power over conduct. The worship of love is compared in a Norman *fabliau* to the worship of God:—

"Et pour verité vous record
Dieu et Amour sont d'un accord
Dieu aime sens et honorance
Amour ne l'a pas en viltance
Dieu hait orgueil et fausseté
Et Amour aime loyauté
Dieu aime honneur et courtoisie
Et bonne amour ne hait-il mie;
Dieu écoute belle prière
Amour ne la met pas en arrière."

And Chaucer makes Troilus say:—

"Thanked be ye, Lord, for that I love,
This is the right life that I am in,
To flemin all manner vice and sin,
This doeth me so to virtue for to entende
That day by day I in my will amende."

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Of course these ideas in the grasp of weaker minds, and when they became a fashion, lost their force and their beauty, and developed into the exaggerated and insipid songs of the later troubadours and trouvères. They gave rise to weary poems like *The Romance of the Rose*, and became actually ridiculous in the hands of English writers, who were eager to follow a fashion which was so entirely foreign to their nature. The chivalry of Gower is but grotesque and tedious servility:—

> "What thing she bid me do, I do,
> And when she bid me go, I go,
> And when her list to clepe, I come.
>
> . . . . .
>
> I serve, I bow, I look, I lout,
> Mine eye followeth her about;
> What so she will, so will I,
> When she will sit I knele by,
> When she will stand then will I stand;"

and so on throughout whole page.

And even the larger and more spiritualised chivalry of the Italian Renaissance does not always sit easily on "the Courtly Makers." In *Tottel's Miscellany*, published in 1557, a collection of the sonnets and love-songs of writers in this school, there are many poems, some even by Wyatt and Surrey, which are purely conventional and empty and artificial. We hear so much of "raging love," of scalding and smoking sighs, of vapoured eyes;—these poets with their love-sick poems make us feel how utterly grotesque and ridiculous a thing is chivalry if its spirit is forgotten. For the spirit of chivalry being so delicate and ideal, its sublimity can easily become foolishness of the most aggravated kind. The ideas of chivalry have had the fate of melodies which, "once set afloat in the world, are taken up by all sorts of instruments, some of them wofully coarse, feeble, and out of tune, until people are in danger of crying out that the melody itself is detestable." Many of the Company of Courtly Makers, however, were preserved from excessive artificiality and consequent grotesqueness by their personal admiration and close imitation of Petrarch's spirit and works. In Petrarch's great and pure personality we have a good example of the spirit of chivalry at its best. The inspirer of Petrarch's life and poems was Laura, daughter of Hudibert of Noves, and wife of Hugues de Saxe, both of Avignon. Petrarch first saw her on the 6th April 1327, and she died of the plague on the

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6th April 1348. For her he had that religious and enthusiastic passion "such as mystics imagine they feel for the deity, and such as Plato supposes to be the bond of union between elevated minds."

In more than 300 sonnets Petrarch celebrates all the little circumstances of his attachment, and records "those precious favours which," as Sismondi says, "after an acquaintance of fifteen or twenty years, consisted at most of a kind word, a glance not altogether severe, a momentary expression of regret and tenderness at his departure, or a deeper paleness at the idea of leaving his beloved and constant friend." He has written four sonnets on the emotions he experienced on picking up her glove; and in tracing all the minutest details of this distant attachment, in employing his imagination to describe all the emotions that he felt, that he was feeling, or that he might have felt, even he becomes at times wearisome and conventional. But occasional artificiality and convention can be pardoned to one who gave a stimulus to all that was best in chivalry, to all that was so powerful in refining human life and emotion. His works embody that spirit so well understood by a modern writer:—

"It is my fate: your soul hath conquered mine,
And I must be your slave and glory in
The bondage, whether cruel or benign.
Still let me cherish hopes even here to win,
By strenuous toil, the far-off Prize divine;
And feed on visions, not so shadowy thin,
Of gaining you beneath a nobler sun
Should I in this life's battle be undone.

"And with my passionate love for evermore
Is blended pure and reverent gratitude,
Nor can I this full sacrifice deplore,
Though you should scorn me, whom you have subdued,
Or know not what devotion I outpour.
Ah! from this timeless night what boundless good
Your presence hath bestowed on me! no less
That I am stung with my unworthiness.

. . . . . .

"Henceforth my life shall not unearnest prove;
It hath an ardent aim, a glorious goal:
Numb faith relives: you from your sphere above
Have planted and must nourish in my soul
That priceless blessing, pure and fervent love,
O'er which no thought of self can have control.
If with these boons come ever longing pain,
It shall be welcomed for the infinite gain."

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The form which Petrarch and his followers chose for the expression of these emotions was the sonnet. The lyric poet, the poet who expresses transitory moods and emotions, is affected, says Sismondi, not inspired. "Poetry addressed to others, of which the object is persuasion, should borrow its ornaments from eloquence, but when it is an effusion of the heart, an overflow of sentiment is its embellishment and harmony." The intensity and harmony of verse obedient to certain rules which make what we call the sonnet, was the form invented by the poet for the expression of the moods of ideal and chivalric love, a form borrowed originally from the Sicilians, but which the chivalrous poets of Italy, Dante, Petrarch, and his followers, first made popular. The ideal sonnet is composed of two quatrains which introduce the subject, exciting an expectation which is fulfilled by the two tercets, which move more rapidly; the lines increasing in intensity up to the thirteenth and fourteenth lines, which sometimes are almost epigrammatic in their condensation of feeling and thought. In the first eight lines there are only two rhymes, with their order fixed for the first quatrain, where it is a b b a, but not for the second. In the last six lines there are three rhymes, which the poet can arrange as he likes. "The sonnet," says Sismondi, "is essentially musical, and essentially founded on the harmony of sound, from which its name is derived. It acts upon the mind rather through the words than through the thoughts. The richness and fulness of the rhymes (the sonnet has generally four and never more than five rhymes) constitute a portion of its grace. The return of the same sounds makes a powerful impression in proportion to their repetition and completeness; and we are astonished when we thus find ourselves affected almost without the power of being able to ascertain the cause of our emotion." The limited emotions of the chivalric sonnet prevented it from reaching that pitch of excellence which it did afterwards in the hands of Daniel and of Shakspere, who, living in freer and more emancipated times, cast off conventions of emotions and thought, and made the sonnet breathe real passion and true thought.

It was Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, who first naturalised the sonnet in England. He never indeed wrote perfect sonnets, regarded from the point of view of that mechanism from which Petrarch hardly ever departed, for he did not observe the rules with regard to rhyme; but his little poems of fourteen lines are the sincere expressions of his emotional, though essentially chivalrous and therefore artificial nature: his verses are not

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mere imitations and translations of Petrarch's sonnets, as were those of the elder and more accurate poet, Wyatt: he made the sonnet in England a real living form of art. Born probably in 1517, he passed a life which united the habits of scholar and courtier, but the incidents of which are obscure. He was beheaded on Tower Hill, January 21, 1547, nominally on the charge of high treason, really because he was the victim of a Court intrigue. In addition to being capable of "that poetic elaboration which the sonnet required,"—in addition to possessing very markedly that capacity for self-criticism which, as Taine says, marks the attainment of real culture,—Surrey possessed to a high degree the poetic temperament, a lively and vivid imagination, a great sensibility to beauty of all kinds, moral, physical, and natural. Not only did he make many changes in the mechanism and style of verse, introducing the pastoral by his "Complaint of a Dying Lover," the first poem of this sort in the English language,—not only did he first introduce blank verse, by his translation of two books of the *Æneid* into ten-syllabled lines of metre without rhyme,—but he infused these forms with real spirit. His sonnets to Geraldine, though generally, owing to the limited emotions with which they deal, artificial and conventional, are on the whole the genuine and sometimes beautiful expressions of the poet's feelings. There is true pathos and feeling in "The Complaint by Night of the Lover not beloved":—

"Alas! so all things now do hold their peace!
Heaven and earth disturbed in no thing,
The beasts, the air, the birds their song do cease;
The nightës car the stars about do bring;
Calm is the sea: the waves work less and less:
So am not I, whom love, alas! doth wring,
Bringing before my face the great increase
Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing
In joy and woe, as in a doubtful ease,
For my sweet thoughts do sometimes pleasure bring:
But by and by the cause of my disease
Gives me a pang that inwardly doth sting.
When that I think what grief it is again
To live and lack the thing should rid my pain."

And the sonnet in which he "vows to love faithfully, howsoever he be rewarded," is animated by the best spirit of the Renaissance chivalry, though the expression and form are less perfect:—

"Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green,
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice:

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In temperate heat where he is felt and seen:
In presence prest of people mad or wise.
Set me in high, or yet in low degree,
In longest night or in the shortest day:
In clearest sky or where clouds thickest be,
In lusty youth or when my hairs are grey.
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell,
In hill or dale, or in the foaming flood.
Small or at large, alive where so I dwell:
Sick or in health: in evil fame or good.
Hers will I be, and only with this thought
Content myself, although my chance be nought."

There is spirit and fire in the little poem "In Praise of his Love," a subject so hackneyed, so used up, by many of the contributors to *Tottel's Miscellany*, who are for ever praising their mistresses, and insisting that though Petrarch was never surpassed, yet that Laura is again and again surpassed. "He reproveth them that compare their ladies with his."

"Give place, ye lovers, here before,
That spent your boasts and brags in vain;
My lady's beauty passeth more
The best of yours I dare well sayen
Than doth the sun the candle bright,
Or brightest day the darkest night."

It is to Surrey's credit that he recognised the full worth of his contemporary Wyatt, who, although inferior to him as a poet of chivalry, recommends himself to the modern mind by the earnestness and sincerity of his nature, which, tinged with gloom, perhaps rendered him unfit to follow chivalric fashions. His best poems dwell on the more impersonal and deeper sides of the conventional emotion: they are animated by that broader and deeper spirit which is anxious to get outside its little world of personal hopes and fears,—a spirit which is seen at a depressing height in the later philosophic poems of Sir John Davies and Lord Brooke.

Surrey's poem on "The Death of Sir Thomas Wyatt" praises the poet in the ordinary conventional terms: "A man of visage stern and mild: where both did grow, Vice to contemn, and Virtue to rejoice: . . . an eye whose judgment none affect could blind . . . whose piercing look did represent a mind, with Virtue fraught, reposed void of guile." We gather, both from Surrey's poem and from the facts of Wyatt's life, that he possessed the vigorous Elizabethan versatility. "He was a courtier, a poet, a diplomatist, a statesman, a scholar of great linguistic attainments, an athlete

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delighting in his strength and skill. Born in 1503, he soon became a conspicuous figure owing to his wit, his fascinating manners, and his handsome person. . . He was less original than Surrey in that much of what he wrote was rather direct translation or close imitation: he copied his sonnets from Petrarch, his lyrics from the Italian, and also from Spanish and French sources. With the exception of about half-a-dozen of his poems, all are modelled on writings in those languages."

Nevertheless Wyatt, regardless of convention, infuses his own sad, earnest, dignified spirit into some of his productions. The poem in which "the lover beseecheth his mistress not to forget his stedfast faith and true intent," is full of grave, true feeling, and has none of the artificiality that hung about most of "the Courtly Makers":—

"Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant,
My great travail so gladly spent
Forget not yet.

"Forget not yet when first began
The weary life ye know, since when
The suit, the service none can tell,
Forget not yet.

"Forget not yet the great assays,
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways,
The painful patience on delays,
Forget not yet.

"Forget not, oh! forget not this,
How long ago hath been and is,
The mind that never meant amiss
Forget not yet.

"Forget not then thine own approved,
The which so long hath thee so loved,
Whose steadfast faith yet never moved.
Forget not yet."

Considering the conventions of the time which looked upon a wrong done as one of the best motives for poetic fury and passion, there is genuine magnanimity in the poem in which the "Forsaken lover consoleth himself with remembrance of past happiness":—

"Spite hath no power to make me sad,
Nor scornfulness to make me plain:

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It doth suffice that once I had,
And so to leave it is no pain.
  Let them frown on that least doth gain,
Who did rejoice must needs be glad;
And though with words thou ween'st to reign,
It doth suffice that once I had.
  Since that in checks thus overthwart,
And coyly looks thou dost delight:
It doth suffice that mine thou wert,
Though change hath put thy faith to flight.
  Alas! it is a peevish spite,
To yield thyself and then to part;
But since thou force thy faith so light,
It doth suffice that mine thou wert.
  And since thy love doth thus decline,
And in thy heart such hate doth grow;
It doth suffice that thou wert mine,
And with good will I quite it so.
  Sometime my friend, farewell my foe,
Since thou change I am not thine;
But for relief of all my woe,
It doth suffice that thou wert mine.
  Praying you all that hear this song,
To judge no wight, nor none to blame;
It doth suffice she doth me wrong,
And that herself doth know the same.
  And though she change it is no shame,
Their kind it is, and hath been long:
Yet I protest she hath no name;
It doth suffice she doth me wrong."

In *Tottel's Miscellany* we have also poems which, in a moralising tone, treat of interests of human life other than the fashionable ones of love and chivalric worship. Their existence points to a time soon coming when the conventions of the Early Renaissance would be shaken off, and thought and feeling would become unshackled, and range round the world, becoming wider and deeper. Surrey himself translated from Martial a poem, advising "the means to attain a happy life," through "the quiet mind, the equal friend, . . . true wisdom joined with simpleness." Various minor poets wrote on "the mutabilitie of this life," on the "transitoriness of beauty." Grimald wrote poems "on laws," "on friendship," a "description of virtue," a poem in "praise of measure-keeping." Vaux having given in to the prevailing fashion so much as to write a poem on "the assault of Cupid upon the city where the lover's heart lay wounded, and how he was taken," experiences a reaction in the poem where "the aged lover renounceth love."

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"I loathe that I did love
In youth that I thought sweet.
. . . . . .
And ye that bide behind,
Have ye none other trust:
As ye of clay were cast by kind,
So shall we waste to dust."

Poets begin to give symptoms, marked in some cases by genius, that the trammels put upon sentiment by the Courtly Makers are becoming irksome. But that real genius—deep, refined, delicate, and powerful thought—could find expression within the sphere of the Courtly Makers is proved by the sonnets of Astrophel to Stella.

In Sir Philip Sidney's poems are found the true essence of Renaissance chivalry, expressed with the thoughtfulness and animated by that delicate ideal feeling which specially distinguished his personality. Some of Sidney's sonnets are indeed barren and over-elaborate, for he belonged to the school known as the "Areopagus." Gabriel Harvey, a critic and scholar, who must have had real merit, or he would not have made and preserved the friendship of so many of the celebrated men of his time, though he is only known to us now by his absurd classical conventions and the virulence of his literary quarrels, was the centre of a group of poets who made poetic form their object, trying to bring in a reform which should make English verse entirely obedient and subservient to classical rules. Spenser, who lived much longer than Sidney, quite emancipated himself both in theory and practice from this inartistic and unpatriotic idea. Later he turned the system into ridicule, saying that it had been the cause of the production of many "passing singular odd poems;" but Sidney never in theory threw off the conventions and theories of his youth, though often in practice the sincerity of his feeling caused him to triumph over the stiffness and artificiality naturally engendered by too much attention to form.

"Fool, said my muse to me,
Look in thine heart and write."

And love, says Sidney in another sonnet, "doth hold my hand and make me write." Of the sincerity of his inspiration there can be no doubt. It was the outcome of his feeling for Penelope Devereux, daughter of the first Earl of Essex,—a feeling which was probably quite genuine and unaffected at first, but which afterwards he evidently cultivated as a poetic motive. He met

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her first in 1575, next in 1580, when she was either married or pledged to Lord Rich. Sidney's sonnets, like Shakspere's, have an autobiographical interest. They can be divided into three distinct stages. First, there is the period of deep idealising passion, when he glorifies Stella and expresses scorn of his rival, Lord Rich. Sonnet V. is very characteristic of Sidney in its mixture of chivalry and Puritanism, in its admiration both for physical and for moral beauty :—

"It is most true that eyes are form'd to serve
The inward light, and that the heavenly part
Ought to be king, from whose rules who do swerve
Rebels to nature, strive for their own smart.
It is most true what we call Cupid's dart
An image is, which for ourselves we carve
And, fools, adore in temple of our heart
Till that good God make church and churchmen starve :
True, that the beauty virtue is indeed
Whereof this beauty can be but a shade,
Which elements with mortal mixture breed :
True that on earth we are but pilgrims made,
And should in soul up to our country move :
True and yet true—that I must Stella love."

Sonnet XXXI. opens with two lines that are quite perfect in themselves, and give at the same time the spirit of the following sonnet, which is one of the saddest and yet one of the most beautiful of the whole series :—

"With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the skies,
How silently, and with how wan a face !
. . . . . .
Then even of fellowship, O moon, tell me
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit ?"

The second division includes those sonnets which are animated by a more hopeful spirit. Stella has apparently relented to a certain extent.

"O joy too high for my low style to show,
O bliss fit for a nobler state than mine.
. . . . . .
Gone is the winter of my misery,
My spring appears : O see what here doth grow !
For Stella hath with words where faith doth shine
Of her high heart given me the monarchy."

And the third division of the sonnets includes those in which he

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claims freedom from love, drawn away from Stella "by a great cause which needs both use and art."

> "Sweet, for a while give respite to my heart.
> . . . . . .
> O let not fools in me thy works reprove,
> And scorning say, see what it is to love."

Thus Sidney's last sonnets breathe that freer spirit which was to throw off the conventions of chivalry and produce the vivid glowing poetry of Marlowe and Shakspere and their contemporaries; and in his lyrics we could almost place him with these greatest Elizabethans, so free and spirited and emancipated does he show himself. The song to Stella in her absence, beginning

> "O dear life, when shall it be
> That mine eyes thine eyes shall see?"

the dirge beginning

> "Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be spread,
> For Love is dead,"

show that he stood on the very threshold of the new life and of that art which was its free expression.

Thoroughly artificial but yet charming was the poet Watson. He is an "ingenious and posthumous child of the Courts of Love," with his "Passionate Centurie of Love," and "The Tears of Fancy or Love disdained."

The poet Constable stands between the artificial school and the fresh native school that was springing up. "His things," says Mr. Lang, "have at once the freshness of a young and the trivial grace of a decadent literature." He can introduce real freshness into a pastoral song, as in that between Phillis and Amaryllis; he can put vigour into the well-worn classical tale of Venus and Adonis.

George Gascoigne and Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, must also be mentioned as pioneers far more distinguished than Constable, though less distinguished than Sidney. As Mr. Church says, "The scanty remains of Sackville's poetry are chiefly interesting because they show a strong sense of the defects of the existing poetical standards and a craving after something better." Sackville, who is celebrated as having taken part in the authorship of the *Tragedy of Gorboduc*, is renowned also as having planned a great work called *The Mirror for Magistrates*, containing a series of poetical examples showing how "grievous plagues, vices, are punished in great princes and magistrates, and

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how frail and unstable worldly prosperity is found where fortune seemeth most highly to favor." His efforts after moral purpose are not less evident than his struggle after form: he had evidently theories of poetic fitness and grace, to which he had not talent enough to be true in practice. But he has a certain grandeur and largeness of style which he must have gained from the careful and appreciative study of the master at whose feet he sat—Dante. In the Induction to *The Mirror for Magistrates*, which, with the story of Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, was his contribution to this moral poem, there is observable an attempt to be grand and severe in expression and in the choice of ornament, which, sometimes failing, gives an impression of rigidity and stiffness to the verse, but which at other times is successful and recalls the dignified intensity of Dante's verse. Sorrows guide the poet to the realms of the dead:—

> "I shall thee guide first to the grisly lake,
> And thence unto the blissful place of rest,
> Where thou shalt see and hear the plaint they make
> That whilom here bare sway among the best:
> This shalt thou see: but great is the unrest
> That thou must bide, before thou canst attain
> Unto the dreadful place where these remain.
> . . . . . .
> Thence come we to the horror and the hell,
> The large great kingdoms and the dreadful reign
> Of Pluto on his throne where he did dwell,
> The wide waste places and the hugy plain,
> The wailings, shrieks, and sundry sorts of pain,
> The sighs, the sobs, the deep and deadly groan:
> Earth, air, and all resounding plaint and moan."

George Gascoigne is spoken of by Webbe as "a witty gentleman, and the very chief of our late rhymers." He was exceedingly popular in his day, being one who recommended himself by his personal attractions and accomplishments to his contemporaries. Posterity, in doing him justice, must take into account the facts on which Nash grounded his opinion. "Whoever my private opinion condemns as faulty, Master Gascoigne is not to be abridged of his deserved esteem who first beat the path to that perfection which our best poets have aspired to since his departure: whereto he did ascend by comparing the Italian with the English, as Tully did Græca cum Latinis." He wrote, in common with the minor poets of his age, poems on the "Arraignment of a Lover," on the "Strange Passion of a Lover;" but in his "Steel Glass" he attempted a work of a more serious and

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unconventional character, which he meant to be a satire on the vices and follies of his age, "to hold the mirror up to nature as deformed by society." It is in blank verse, and is "the first example in our language," says Prof. Morley, "of a poem of any length and not dramatic, written in that measure." It is an effective didactic satire animated by a sincere and religious earnestness.

But the poet was yet to come who could combine spiritual greatness and earnestness with feeling for the varied beauty and interest of the world.

PART II.—*Prose.—Euphuism and beginnings of Art Criticism.*

LYLY, John, *b.* 1554, *d.* 1606.—*Euphues:* First part published, 1579; Second, 1680.

SIDNEY'S *Arcadia:* Begun, 1580; published, 1590. *Apologie for Poetrie:* Written about 1581 (first known edition that of 1595). Life: Son of Henry Sidney, President of Wales and Lord Deputy of Ireland under Elizabeth, and Lady Mary Dudley, daughter of Duke of Northumberland, sister of Earl of Leicester; entered Shrewsbury School, 1564; went to Christchurch, Oxford, 1568; abroad from May 1572 to May 1575; 1575, appears at Elizabeth's Court, takes part in Kenilworth progress; 1577, ambassador to Rudolf II. at Prague; makes acquaintance with Harvey and Spenser, 1578; retires to Penshurst till 1580; returns to Court, 1580; knighted, 1581; 1583, Member of Parliament for second time; 1584, appointed Governor of Flushing; 1586, fatally wounded at battle of Zutphen.

WEBBE, William.—*Discourse of English Poesie:* Published, 1586. *The Art of English Poesie,* in three books (the first of Poets and Poesie, the second of Proportion, and the third of Ornament): Published, 1589.

GOSSON, Stephen.—*The School of Abuse,* 1579.

Euphuism and the Euphuists have for the most part been cruelly underrated by a posterity who have only noticed the more trivial, external, and degenerate aspect of this system and its followers. However far removed many of the Euphuists may have been from the ideal of their system,—however affected and insipid and often ridiculous some of them may have become,—it can never be doubted but that the spirit of Euphuism was sound, and that the influence it exercised by way of refinement and polish, both of thought and of style, was great and beneficial. Euphuism, as it is now generally known in its later and more degenerate aspect, was little more than the popularisation, and therefore vulgarisation, of the ideal of Elizabeth's Court,—an ideal which in itself was high and worthy of respect. At a time when

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the nation was passing through great and important crises, both externally and internally, much importance and responsibility attached itself to the central government. This central government was represented by Elizabeth, whose eccentricities and vanities and irresolution were obscured to her Court by the ideal halo that chivalry led them to cast over her as a woman, and their patriotism as the representative of their country. A high idea of the duties of a sovereign and her court were engendered in this enthusiastic time, which coloured with its fervid imagination the prominent and responsible position occupied by this last of the Tudor sovereigns, who certainly, more than any of her predecessors, exerted her almost despotic power with reference to the good of her people and to the independence and dignity of England. A high standard of disinterestedness, of enthusiasm and devotion to public and impersonal duties was set up; the Court felt its responsibility and dignity as the leaders and inspirers of the nation. "Nobility of blood," says Mr. Church, "was thought much of; but there was also a nobility of mind to which every one could aspire, devotion to heroic and unselfish ends, to truth in thought and action, to that dignity and self-control that come from fidelity to high and unselfish aims. And in addition the courtier must be polished and refined in expression; he must be a scholar and a man of culture; he must have his imagination abundantly developed, or he could not do his duty in the sphere of practical life. He must be capable of devoted admiration for beauty; his words and his actions must ever be the fit expressions of that chivalry which is inspired by beauty, and which worships beauty in every form, whether physical or moral."

Such an ideal was not merely imaginary: it found fit expression in the personality of Sir Philip Sidney. Even in his youth Sidney was famous for that "lovely and familiar gravity" which gave him reverence above his years. He was born of noble and celebrated parents. He had nobility of blood, and all the education, cultivation, and experience that, far more than rank, was necessary to make the Elizabethan "gentleman." He went to school at Shrewsbury, to college at Oxford; he travelled after the groundworks of his education were completed to France, Germany, Italy, spending eight months in the country which was then considered the centre of learning and refinement. He was introduced at Court on his return in 1575 by his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, and, meeting "Stella," probably about this time wrote the sonnets addressed to her. For the next four or five years, during both his sojourn there, and during his embassy

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to Rudolf, Emperor of Germany, he plunged into fashionable literature by the publication of the *Arcadia*, into controversies on art by his publication of the *Apologie for Poetrie*. A friend of Spenser and of Gabriel Harvey, a member of the "Areopagus," a member of Parliament, an ally of Drake's in his plans for aggressive attacks on Spain through her colonies in America, and, lastly, Governor of Flushing,—Sidney was the ideal of his age in the active many-sided career that he led, uniting the excellencies of the man of literature and the man of the world. The story of his passing on the cup to the dying soldier after the battle of Zutphen, when he himself lay mortally wounded, is but one incident in a life which was throughout animated by a high and unselfish spirit. He was adored by his contemporaries and by immediate posterity. Sir Robert Naunton, in his "*Fragmenta Regalia*, or Observations on the late Queen Elizabeth, her times and favorites," says: "They have a very quaint and factious figment of him: that Mars and Mercury fell at variance whose servant he should be: and there is an epigrammist that saith: that Art and Nature had spent their excellencies in his fashioning, and fearing that they should not end what they begun, they bestowed him on Fortune, and Nature stood musing and amazed to behold her own work. But these are the petulancies of poets." "Certain it is," Naunton goes on to say, "he was a noble and matchless gentleman;" and without doubt he was matchless in that no one realised so well the ideas that underlie the best spirit of Euphuism, especially that spiritual side so obscured by later Euphuists. He but describes himself in describing David in the *Apologie for Poetrie* as "a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting beauty to be seen by the eyes of the mind only cleared by faith." Later, and in proportion as its ideas become more fashionable and popular, its spirit seemed entirely to vanish, and its shell only was left. It is this shell of quaint conceits and frigid thoughts, of sententious and rather commonplace morality, "a quaint mimicry of high sentiment," expressed in elaborate language, that is generally and exclusively known as Euphuism. And even if it had never been anything more than this, the attention it demanded to form and style would alone have been excellent discipline for the English mind, naturally careless of elaboration and literary externals. As it was, however, it carried with it the suggestion of something still better and higher, which was realised by the best minds that grasped it. Mr. Charles Kingsley, who understands so well the spirit of Euphuism, and has made us feel even its minor charms in the

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person of Frank Leigh of *Westward Ho*, tells us "to open our eyes and see in these old Elizabethan gallants our own ancestors, showing forth, with the luxuriant wildness of youth, all the virtues which still go to the making of an Englishman. Let us not only see in their commercial and military daring, in their political astuteness, in their deep reverence for law, and in their solemn sense of the great calling of the English nation, the antitypes or rather the examples of our own; but let us confess that this chivalry is only another garb of that beautiful tenderness and mercy which is now, as it was then, the twin sister of English valour; and even in their often extravagant fondness for continental manners and literature, let us recognise that old Anglo-Norman teachableness and wide-heartedness which has enabled us to profit by the wisdom and civilisation of all ages and all lands, without prejudice to our own distinctive national character."

The very exaltation and refinement of the Euphuistic ideal rendered it easily capable of becoming degenerate and ridiculous. Euphuism at its best was a system of chivalry which could only be maintained by the cultivation of a high and delicate imagination; in the grasp of coarser and more ordinary minds it became merely a seeking after out-of-the-way thoughts, after conceits, after a certain affected refinement expressed in the most ornate and elaborate way. Unfortunately even Sir Philip Sidney allowed his talents to be employed in catering to the demands and tastes of a fashionable and Euphuistic world, which had lowered the spirit and expression of true Euphuism to suit its own comprehension and tastes.

The *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney is a type of the fashionable novel of the day. It is a long pastoral romance in prose mixed with verse according to the Italian fashion, adding to the pastoral a new heroic element, consisting of diffuse accounts of the adventures of knights and ladies, attached to a very loose thread of plot: it describes at length their beauty, their valour, and their moral and mental excellencies. It differs from the romances of an earlier and less civilised chivalry only in the polish and elaboration of the language, and in the occasional gleams of thoughtfulness which reveal for a moment the personality of the author. The heroes of the novel, Musidorus and Pyrocles, being wrecked, find their way to Arcadia. "This country among all the provinces of Greece hath ever been had in singular reputation, partly for the sweetness of the air and other natural benefits, but principally for the well-tempered minds of the

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people, who (finding that the shining title of glory so much affected by other nations doth indeed help little to the happiness of life) are the only people, which as by their justice and providence give neither cause or hope to their neighbours to annoy them, so are they not stirred with false praise to trouble other's quiet, thinking it a small reward for the wasting of their own lives in ravenyng that their posterity should long after say they had done so." This country is governed by a king who has broken up his court, and with his wife and daughters lives in strict seclusion.

"Here dwelleth and reigneth a prince by name Basileus, a prince of sufficient skill to govern so quiet a country, where the good minds of the former princes had set down good laws, and the well-bringing up of the people doth serve as a most sure bond to hold them. But to be plain with you, he excels in nothing so much as the zealous love of his people, wherein he doth not only pass all his own fore-goers, but as I think all the princes living. Whereof the cause is that though he exceed not in the virtues which get admiration: as depth of wisdom, height of courage, and largeness of magnificence, yet is he notable in those which stir affection, as truth of word, meekness, courtesy, mercifulness, and liberality."

His two daughters "are beyond all measure excellent in all the gifts allotted to reasonable creatures, that we may think they were born to show that nature is no stepmother to her sex, how much soever some men (shallow-witted only in evil speaking) have sought to disgrace them. The elder is named Pamela, by many men not deemed inferior to her sister: for my part when I marked them both there was (if at least such perfection may receive the word of more) more sweetness in Philoclea, but more majesty in Pamela: methought love played in Philoclea's eyes and threatened in Pamela's: methought Philoclea's beauty only persuaded, but so persuaded as all men must yield: Pamela's beauty used violence, and such violence as no heart could resist. And it seems that such proportion is between their minds. Philoclea so bashful as though her excellence had stolen into her before she was aware: so humble that she will put all pride out of countenance: in sum, such proceedings as will stir hope, but teach hope good manners: Pamela of high thoughts, who avoids not pride by not knowing her own excellencies, but by making that one of her excellencies to be void of pride; her mother's wisdom, greatness, nobility, but (if I guess aright) knit with more austere temper."

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It naturally excites Pyrocles and Musidorus to hear that Basileus, the King of Arcadia, keeps his two daughters, the majestic Pamela and the sweet Philoclea, in seclusion. One meeting suffices to make Pyrocles fall in love with Philoclea and Musidorus with Pamela. After many adventures, in the course of which Pyrocles, who has disguised himself as an Amazon, and gets into trouble by involuntarily winning the affections of Basileus, who thinks he is a woman, and of the queen, who sees he is not, the novel ends happily with the desired marriage of each. It is exceedingly lengthy, and containing many episodes which have little interest in themselves, and which appear to have no connection with the plot, the general effect is dull and wearisome. It is very like what the *Faery Queen* would be without its allegory and without the charm of its verse. Only occasionally are we reminded that it was written by one of the least conventional and most thoughtful of Euphuists. Only occasionally occur those reflections which remind us of the quaint philosophy of its author, of his deep-rooted belief in the wisdom of goodness. "It comes of every evil ground," he makes Philanax say in his letter to Basileus, "that ignorance should be the mother of faithfulness. O no, he cannot be good that knows not why he is good, but stands so far good as his fortune may keep him unassayed, but coming then to that, his rude simplicity is either easily changed or easily deceived: and so grows that to be the last excuse of his fault which seemed to have been the first foundation of his faith," *i.e.*—for Sidney, in the earnestness of his thought, forgets that polish and perspicuity of style for which the Euphuists struggled—he means that ignorance is made in the last resort the excuse for the crimes of one who in the first instance grounded his virtues on ignorance.

But the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney was not even the greatest literary triumph within the small sphere of Euphuistic fashion. The work which was the most fashionable, the work which indeed gave the name to this fashion, though the book, in itself, was but the outcome of the movement, is Lyly's *Euphues*. Michael Drayton speaks with great severity of Lyly and his immediate followers as

> "Talking of stones, stars, plants, of fishes, flys,
> Playing with words and idle similes,
> As th' English, Apes, and very Zanies be
> Of everything, that they do hear and see,
> So imitating his ridiculous tricks,
> They spake and writ all like mere lunatics."

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Indeed the test of an ordinary fashionable Euphuist was his belief in a natural philosophy, which supposed certain animals and vegetables to exist with peculiar properties for the purpose of affording similes. Everything was viewed by the thorough Euphuist from the point of view of its capacity for lending ornaments to style; the two classical languages were the only ones considered worthy of attention, and these simply because in them were found the best adornments of speech.

At college John Lyly, who, his biographer says, was always averse "to the crabbed studies of logic and philosophy," paid enough attention to Latin and Greek to be able in after-life to drag in from them plentiful allusions and quotations; but the spirit of these languages was never grasped by him or by any of his followers; they were mines to be searched for phrases and ornaments to a style which was made as elaborate as possible by antithesis and alliteration. Although Lyly "did in a manner neglect academical studies," like many more justly famous men before and after him, yet not so much but that he was able to take his degree and to become a Master of Arts in 1575. He then began his unsuccessful career in catering for the fashionable needs of a Court which refused to grant him the paltry reward for which he had laboured. The Queen never gave him the office of Master of the Revels, for which he worked so hard; he had no reward during his life save that of being considered at the Court of Queen Elizabeth "a rare poet, witty, comical, and facetious." The second petition he addressed to the Queen in 1593 is very characteristic in the mixed humour and rather pathetic and elaborate quaintness of the thought and style of this faithful and frank servant of fashion and struggler for popularity. "Most gracious and dread sovereign, time cannot work my petitions the time. After many years' service it pleased your majesty to except against tents and toils: I wish that for tents I might put in tenements, so should be eased of some toils. Some land, some good fines, or forfeitures should fall by the just fall of these most false traitors, that seeing nothing will come by the Revels, I may prey upon the Rebels. Thirteen years your highness' servant but yet nothing: twenty friends that though they say they will be sure, I find them sure to be slow. A thousand hopes but all nothing, a hundred promises but yet nothing. Thus casting up the inventory of my friends, hopes, promises and times, the *summa totalis* amounteth to just nothing. My last will is shorter than mine invention: but 3 legacies, patience to my creditors, melancholy with-

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out measure to my friends, and beggary without shame to my family."

But John Lyly, in spite of his strivings after worldly prosperity,—in spite of his efforts after the elaboration and finish of expression of which thought was but an adjunct,—deserves from posterity a little of that popularity which was so largely bestowed on him in his own day. For no one can read Lyly's writings without feeling that within his small sphere he is a perfect artist; that, as one of his biographers says, "his genie was *naturally* bent to the pleasant paths of poetry and art;" it was "as if Apollo had given to him a wreath of his own bays without snatching or struggling." He, in his small way, is like the great founders of all schools; the rules and regulations that he handed down to his followers were instinctively observed by himself; what cost his followers effort and struggle was to him a second nature. In his book *Euphues* take any passage and it will be found, although abounding in the tedious machinery of Euphuism, in the conceits, the puns, the alliterations, and the antitheses that mark Euphuism, that its phrases on the whole run gracefully and read easily, as if the writer had put them down without conscious forethought or subsequent elaboration. Take, for instance, the opening sentence of the book, which introduces Euphues to the reader: "There dwelt in Athens a young gentleman of great patrimony, and of so comely a personage, that it was doubted whether he were not more bound to Nature for the lineaments of his person, or to Fortune for the increase of his possessions. But nature, impatient of comparisons, and as it were disdaining a companion or co-partner in her working, added to this comeliness of his body, such a sharp capacity of mind, that not only she proved fortune counterpart, but was half of that opinion that she herself was only current. This young gallant of more wit than wealth, and yet of more wealth than wisdom, seeing himself inferior to none in pleasant conceits, though himself superior to all in honest conditions, insomuch that he thought himself so apt to all things that he gave himself almost to nothing but practising of those things commonly which are incident to these sharp wits, fine phrases, smooth quips, merry taunts, jesting without meane and abusing mirth without measure. As therefore the sweetest rose hath his prickle, the finest velvet his bracke, the fairest flower his branne, so the sharpest wit hath his wanton will, and the holiest head his wicked way." The sentences all flow smoothly and easily: it was no effort to Lyly to make his antitheses and find his metaphors.

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This easy style characterises the whole of the book: it is the matter of the book that calls for most severe criticism, partly because there is so little of it, and partly because what there is is entirely borrowed. But Lyly was not aware, or apparently he pretended that he was not aware, that his book could be criticised as lacking in thought. In the dedication to Lord de la Warre, he says that in it there are "more speeches which for gravity will mislike the foolish than unseemly terms which for vanity may offend the wise;" and so little attention does he pretend to have paid to style that he says he will probably not find favour with the fine wits of the day, "with the dainty ear of the curious sifter," who desire superfluous eloquence. With assumed bitterness he speaks of his time: "It is a world to see how Englishmen desire to hear finer speech than the language will allow, to eat finer bread than is made of wheat, or wear finer cloth than is made of wool." It will be seen that the young gentleman, the hero of Lyly's two books, represents in readiness of wit and perfection of body the quality called Euphues by Plato, of which, as the sum of those qualities which best fit for education, we heard so much in Ascham's *Schoolmaster*. Indeed Lyly was indebted to this excellent man, who was himself by no means original, for most of the ideas and some of the plan of the last part of the first book. Euphues goes to Italy and visits Naples; and there meets an aged man, thoroughly believing in Erasmus's precept that experience is the storehouse of fools, and that youth can be saved from all dangers by being well supplied with good advice and sage precepts. This old gentleman, interested in Euphues as possessing "a rare wit, which would in time either breathe an intolerable trouble or bring an incomparable treasure to the common weal . . . and having got an opportunity to communicate with him his mind, with watery eyes, as one lamenting his wantonness, and smiling face, as one loving his wittiness, encountered him in this manner," and by quoting many general moral principles and precepts, illustrating them by countless metaphors, and ornamenting them by many classical allusions, he concludes with a general exhortation to be temperate. "Let thy attire be comely but not too costly, thy diet wholesome but not excessive: use pastime as the word importeth to pass the time in honest recreation. Mistrust no man without cause, neither be thou credulous without proof," etc. etc. That this advice did not find favour with the young and excitable Euphues is sufficiently proved by the frankness of his answer, in which he asks his aged friend if he can see no difference between "the

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young flourishing bay tree and the old withered beech," and before he can put in a word departs, leaving "this old gentleman in a great quandarie." Euphues thus proves himself desirous to see life for himself, and then begin his troubles, which, according to the belief of the day, he would probably have avoided had he taken the old gentleman's advice and not "disdained the counsels of age." He makes a great friend of Philautus, a man of his own age, who introduces him to his betrothed Lucilla. Euphues wins the affections of Lucilla, and thus a quarrel grows up between Euphues and Philautus, which is eventually cured by the further faithlessness of Lucilla, who marries one Curio. Euphues then has a moment of despondency: he laments not having taken the advice of Eubulus; he laments the waste of his life, which has been spent in courting ladies; the waste of his lands, which have been spent in maintenance of bravery; the waste of his wit in idle sonnets. He will endeavour to amend all that is past, and, if need be, live alone and die in the company of books. He commences by adopting towards Philautus and society generally the tone of an adviser. He writes first "the cooling card" for Philautus and for all fond lovers, which serves to cement their renewed friendship. It is to be the saving of all those that find themselves in love. "Come therefore to me all ye lovers that have been deceived by fancy, the glass of pestilence, or deluded by women, the gate to perdition; be as earnest to seek a medicine as you were eager to run into a mischief; the earth bringeth forth as well endive to delight the people, as hemlock to endanger the patient, as well the use to distil, as the nettle to sting, as well the bee to give honey, as the spider to yield poison." As far as we can gather, for the drift of the "cooling card" is obscured by its wordy and elaborate language, vain lovers are to quench the passion at any cost. "This is therefore to admonish all young imps and novices in love, not to blow the coals of fancy with desire: but to quench them with disdain."

Repairing to Athens to follow his own private study, and "calling to mind his former looseness, and how in his youth he had misspent the time, he thought to give a caveat to all parents how they might bring their children up in virtue; and a commandment to all youth, how they should frame themselves to their father's instructions." He writes a letter to the grave matrons and honest maidens of Italy, and an essay on Education, called "Euphues and his Euphebus," copied almost entirely from Ascham; and with a letter to the gentlemen and scholars of

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Athens, and letters written to various friends, the first book of *Euphues* concludes. It was published as a complete book in 1579, and it was not till 1580 that Lyly published *Euphues and his England.* This book contains a letter "to my very good friends the gentlemen scholars of Oxford," who were supposed to have been offended by Lyly's implied criticisms on university teaching in "Euphues and his Euphebus." "In the first part of the *Euphues*," says Prof. Morley, "Lyly satisfies his conscience; in the second part the Court." Lyly's conscience was evidently small and easily satisfied, if we are to judge by the trifling amount of genuine thought and conviction, of traces of independent judgment, contained in the first book: yet it is only too evident in the second book, by his shameless flattery of England, Elizabeth, and the Court, that he is exerting himself with the utmost zeal to please. Euphues and Philautus go to England, where they first make the acquaintance of a moralising old man, who keeps bees, and with a young lady called Camilla, with whom Philautus falls in love. But she eventually marries Lucius, and he consoles himself with a young lady called Violet. Euphues retires to Athens, where he lives "in the contemplation of his old grief."

This second book of *Euphues* shows forcibly how the ideas and thoughts of the best Elizabethan chivalry had become degenerate and exaggerated. Patriotism had become but exaggerated and fulsome praise of everything in England, loyalty but an unthinking and servile panegyric on Elizabeth; the high ideas of a life which should be pure and heroic, devoted to the best ends, resolved themselves into the moral platitudes which Euphues and his friends are continually administering; and lastly, that worship of women, as the inspirers of the highest life, had become merely grotesque and ridiculous flattery. "I for mine own part," says Euphues, "am brought into a paradise by the only imagination of women's virtues, and were I persuaded that all the devils in hell were women, I would never live devoutly to inherit heaven; or that they were all saints in heaven, I would live more strictly for fear of hell. What could Adam have done in his Paradise before the fall without a woman, or how could he have risen again after his fall without a woman? Artificers are wont in their last works to excel themselves, yea, God when He had made all things at the last, made man as most perfect, thinking nothing could be framed as more excellent, yet after him He created a woman, the expresse image of Eternity, the lively picture of nature, the only steel glass for man to behold

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his infirmities by comparing them with women's perfections." Nevertheless Lyly's book is interesting even to posterity, although it be not swayed by the fashion which recognised in it all that propriety could wish. It is certainly amusing, though we may not be sure, in reading some of the passages, whether we are laughing with Lyly or at him. The book cannot fail to interest us as a valuable monument of that time of impetuous study of style and externals, of that worship of foreign models so opposed to the instincts of the rugged English mind; and also it cannot fail to attract as being the spontaneous product of a quaintly-talented mind, whose expression, though artificial and conventional, was never stiff and laboured.

It is in the literature of criticism that the good effects of this discipline, of which Lyly's work is the purest and boldest result, begin to show themselves. The most interesting prose works of this period, if we except Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, a work which struck out altogether a new line in prose style, are the works of poetic and literary criticism, from among which stands out prominently the *Apologie for Poetrie*. Webbe's *Discourse on English Poetrie*, written "with the intention of stirring up others of meet ability to bestow travail on the matter," and Puttenham's *Art of English Poetrie*, dealing first with the nature of poets and poetry, the claims of poets and poetry to dignity and honour; and then, secondly, with the technique of poetry, with the measure and proportion and the shaping of verse. But this "poor gentleman," as Sir John Harrington said of Puttenham, "laboureth greatly to prove or rather to make poetry an art, and reciteth as you may see in the plural number, some pluralities of patterns and parcels of his own poetry with divers pieces of Partheniads and hymns in praise of the most praiseworthy; yet whatsoever he would prove by all these, sure in my poor opinion he doth prove nothing more plainly than that which Mr. Sidney and all the learneder sort that have written of it, do pronounce, viz., that it is a gift and not an art; I say he proveth it, because making himself and so many others so cunning in the art, yet he sheweth himself so slender a gift in it, deserving to be commended as Martiall praiseth one that he compares to Tully."

> "Carmina quod scribis et Apolline nullo
> Laudari debes, hoc Ciceronis habes."

The Apologie for Poetrie, though written in 1581, was probably not printed till 1595; so Sir John Harrington, who wrote this in the preface to *Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verses*

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in 1591, may have seen it in manuscript. It was called forth by the controversy which followed the publication of a book called *The Schoole of Abuse*, by Stephen Gosson, "containing a pleasant invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, and such like Caterpillars of a Commonwealth: setting up the flag of defiance to their mischievous exercise, and overthrowing their bulwarks by profane writers, natural sense and common experiment." He plunged with zeal into the controversy, which had broken out as early as 1576, concerning the morality or immorality of plays, theatres, and poetry and art generally. The clergy habitually attacked art of all kinds; a preacher at St. Paul's Cross in 1577 condemning the theatre in a sermon of unanswerable logic, which connected plays closely with plagues. "The cause of plagues is sin, if you look to it well, and the cause of sin are plays, therefore the cause of plagues are plays." Also another preacher, in 1578, at St. Paul's Cross expresses his surprise that "a filthy play, with the blast of a trumpet, will sooner call thither a thousand, than an hour's tolling of a bell bring to the sermon a hundred." But the zeal of Gosson was somewhat too puritanic; he laid so much stress on the abuse of art, which he seemed thoroughly to understand, and so little stress on its use, which he seemed not to understand at all, that Sir Philip Sidney, to whom he dedicated the book, was apparently displeased with the tendency it showed to discourage art. Edmund Spenser, writing to Gabriel Harvey in 1579, says: "New books I hear of none, but only of one that writing a certain book, called *The School of Abuse*, and dedicating it to Master Sidney, was for his labor scorned: if at least, it be in the goodness of that nature to scorn. Such folly is it not to regard aforehand the inclination and qualitie of him to whom we dedicate our books."

"With quiet judgment looking a little deeper into it," Sidney, in his *Apologie for Poetrie*, establishes the reasons for the existence of poetry, and for the respect in which it should be held. He shows himself to have a real and spontaneous feeling for art, and yet at the same time the reasons that he gives for its existence point to that deeply-rooted admiration for moral worth, that tendency to value things according as they bore directly on morality, which in a less artistic nature would have produced puritanism of the most crushing and narrowing sort. It is hard to believe that we have to do with a "courtly maker," with a writer of chivalric sonnets, who was as capable as his masters of producing verses empty of all thought and feeling, filled mainly

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with elaborate conceits and ingenious metaphors—when we hear him say: "Verse is no cause but only an ornament to poetry." Certainly, in this little book, his sense of his responsibility as champion of art, the necessity he felt of proving that art is a high and ennobling influence, made him as simple in style as he is earnest in thought, and so the *Apologie for Poetrie* remains not only as the best expression of Sidney's individuality, but also as the best specimen of Elizabethan prose style, before Hooker and Bacon had written and given to it a deeper and nobler character.

He begins by saying that poetry should not only be highly thought of because of its antiquity, its universality, because the best minds in the past gave it dignity and reverence, but also because it is the greatest and most effective moral teacher that the world possesses. Virtue is the end of all action, and poetry teaches virtue better than anything else—better than history, which teaches by example—better than philosophy, which teaches by precept. History is tied down to the actual facts of the world, to the truth of a foolish world, which is not always elevating or ennobling; whereas the poet, "lifted up with the vigor of his own invention," sees what things ought to be and what they might be. It is for this reason that the Romans called a poet a prophet, and the Greeks a maker. They felt that a poet is the prophet who can construct out of present facts that vision of a glorious future which is to stimulate men to a noble life. It is more stimulating to a noble life than philosophy, for philosophy can only tell what ought to be done—it cannot give that incitement to virtue that poetry can. "Methinks," says Sidney of the moral philosophers, "I see them coming towards me with a sullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by daylight, rudely clothed for to witness outwardly their contempt of outward things, with books in their hands against glory, whereto they set their names, sophistically speaking against subtlety, and angry with any man in whom they see the foul fault of anger: these men casting largesse as they go of Definitions, Divisions, and distinctions, with a scornful interrogative do soberly ask whether it be possible to find any path, so ready to lead a man to virtue, as that which teacheth what virtue is? and teacheth it not only by delivering forth its very being, its causes and effects: but also by making known its enemy vice which must be destroyed, and its cumbersome servant passion which must be mastered, by showing the generalities that containeth it, and the specialities that are derived from it. Lastly, by plain setting down, how it extendeth itself out of the limits of a man's own little world, to

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the government of families and maintaining of public societies." But the "peerless poet . . . doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the first give you a cluster of grapes: that full of that taste, you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions which must blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness: but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with or prepared for the well-enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you: with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner." That Sidney could make prose not only charming, but that he could make it also the vehicle of reasoning,—that he could select and arrange his facts with reference to his point,—is shown by the arguments which constitute his *Apologie for Poetrie*, and by the summary which he gives of them at the close. "Sith then poetry is of all humane learning the most ancient and of most fatherly antiquitie, as from whence other learnings have taken their beginnings: sith it is so universall, that no learned nation doth despise it, nor no barbarous nation is without it: sith both Roman and Greek gave divine names unto it: the one of prophecying the other of making. And that indeed, that name of making is fit for him; considering, that where as other arts retain themselves within their subject, and receive, as it were, their being from it: the poet only bringeth his own stuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceit: sith neither his description, nor his end, containeth any evil, the thing described cannot be evil: sith his effects be so good as to teach goodness and delight his learners: sith therein (namely, in moral doctrine, the chief of all knowledges) he doth not only far pass the historian, but for instructing is well nigh comparable to the Philosopher, and for moving leaves him behind: sith the Holy Scripture (wherein there is no uncleanness) hath whole parts in it poetical, and that even our Saviour Christ, vouchsafed to use the flowers of it: sith all his kindes are not only in their united forms, but in their severed dissections fully commendable, I think (and think I think rightly) the Laurel crown appointed for triumphing captains, doth worthily (of all other learnings) honor the poets triumph."

Then Sidney proceeds to answer the more detailed accusations that have been brought against poetry—that it is a waste of time, that it is the mother of lies, that Plato banished poets

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from his ideal commonwealth; all which he answers from the high moral point of view that underlies his whole argument, fully admitting the bad effects of art when it is abused and degenerate, but repeating again and again in different words that the ill effects of art are not to be put down to art itself, but to the fact "that by few men Art can be accomplished."

His views on the art of his day are interesting, both because he was a man of instinctive taste, and also because any judgment by a contemporary of contemporary art is always valuable. Chaucer had wants; "but I know not whether to marvel more," he says, "either that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age walk so stumblingly after him." *The Mirror for Magistrates*, The Earl of Surrey's *Lyrics*, *The Shepherd's Calendar*, are singled out for commendation; but "besides these do I not remember to have seen but few (to speak boldly) printed that have poetical sinews in them: for proof whereof let but most of the verses be put in prose and then ask the meaning: and it will be found that one verse did but beget another without ordering at the first, what should be at the last, which becomes a confused mass of words, with a tingling sound of rhyme, barely accompanied with reason."

Sidney thus bears testimony to the fact that the Elizabethan age, as well as many others, suffered from the plague of minor poets. The value of his dramatic criticism is somewhat marred by the fact of his clinging to the classic convention of the three unities of time, place, and action, which were to rule the drama. In his general condemnation he cannot except *Gorboduc*, though he commends it as containing stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, and "full of notable moralitie, which it doth delightfully teach;" but it is disobedient to what he thinks are the essentials of true dramatic art. "How much more in all the rest, where you shall see Asia of the one side and Affrick of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the Player, when he cometh in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now ye shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by, we hear news of shipwreck in the same place, and then we are to blame, if we accept it not for a Rock. Upon the back of that, comes out a hideous monster, with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave. While in the meanwhile 2 armies fly in, represented with 4 swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field. Now of time they are

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much more liberal: for ordinary it is that 2 young princes fall in love. After many traverses she is got with childe, delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child: and all this in 2 hours space: which how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine and Art hath taught and all ancient examples justified: and at this day the ordinary players in Italy will not err in."

Sidney concludes what he calls "this ink-wasting toy of mine" by flinging at those who should continue to scorn the sacred mysteries of poetry, a truly Euphuistic curse, "that while you live, you live in love, and never get favor for lacking skill of a sonnet: and that when you die, your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph."

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CHAPTER IV.

SPENSER.

SPENSER, *b.* 1552. At Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, from 1569-1576; in London, acquainted with Sir Philip Sidney, and in Lord Leicester's household, 1579; goes to Ireland as secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton, 1580; returns to London with Sir Walter Raleigh in 1589; returns to Ireland, 1591; his marriage, 1594; visits London, 1595; rebellion in Munster obliges him to return to London; *d.* Jan. 16, 1598-99.

Translations from Petrarch and Du Bellay, written about 1569; *The Shepherd's Calendar*, 1580; First three books of the *Faery Queen*, 1590; *Complaints*, 1591; Second instalment of *Faery Queen* (4-6), Jan. 1595-96; *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe*, 1595; *Amoretti Sonnets*, 1595; *Epithalamion*, 1595.

SPENSER is distinguished among poets not only because he opened a new epoch in the history of Elizabethan art, but because his was one of the most purely poetic natures that ever artist possessed. Charles Lamb calls him the "poet's poet." His has been the inspiration of many poets of succeeding ages—of Milton, of Browne, and of the Fletchers. Cowley, when a boy, read the *Faery Queen*, and became "irrecoverably a poet." He was Dryden's master in English. Pope in his old age was enthusiastic about the *Faery Queen*. "I read the *Faery Queen* when I was about twelve with a vast deal of delight: and I think it gave me as much when I read it over about a year or two ago." Collins, Gray, Thomson, Akenside, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, all came under his influence. They all felt the inspiration of that delicate, sensitive spirit, of that refined, fantastic genius, which was nourished by the seclusion in which it lived—

"Fashioning worlds of fancies evermore."

Spenser was born in 1552. London was his birthplace, though, as he says in the *Prothalamion*,—

"From another place I take my name,
A house of ancient fame."

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He claimed kinship with the family of the Spensers of Althorpe: it was to the "sisters three" of this family, Lady Carey, Lady Compton, and Lady Strange, that he dedicated three of his minor poems: to Lady Strange *The Tears of the Muses; Mother Hubbard's Tale* to Lady Compton; and *Muiopotmos* to Lady Carey. Spenser, with his chivalrous and aristocratic leanings, would be glad to claim kinship with a noble family. To him noble blood was the natural source of all that was courteous and noble and brave. Sir Calidore, in the *Faery Queen*, admiring Tristram,—

> "that gentle boy
> Which had himself so stoutly well acquit,
> Seeing his face so lovely, stern, and coy,
> And hearing th' answers of his pregnant wit,
> He prays'd it much, and much admir'd it:
> That sure he weened him born of noble blood
> With whom these graces did so goodly fit."

He is surprised that one who is "of mean parentage and kindred base" should be decked

> "With wondrous gifts of nature's grace."

Spenser's early education was given to him at the Merchant Taylors' School, and in 1569 he entered Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, as a sizar. A pathetic picture is given by a contemporary of the privation and sufferings of the poorer scholars at the University. If Spenser led the same life as they did, as his poverty would probably oblige him to do, it must greatly have tended to increase his ascetic and puritan tendencies. Two of the most important friendships of his life were made at college: one with Edward Kirke, the E. K. of *The Shepherd's Calendar*, of whom little is known, his only claim to fame being the English of his preface to *The Shepherd's Calendar*, and his high and almost prophetic appreciation of the talents of his friend. "But I doubt not, so soon as his name shall come into the knowledge of men, and his worthiness be sounded in the trump of fame, but that he shall be not only kist but also beloved of all, embraced of the most, and wondered at of the best." Spenser's other friend, Gabriel Harvey, is better known to fame, as a much-esteemed and respected critic, engaged in vindictive literary quarrels, and much tormented by Nash; known also through Spenser's affectionate lines:—

> "Harvey, the happy above happiest men
> I read; that sitting like a looker-on

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Of this world's stage, dost note with critic pen
The sharp dislikes of each condition ;
And as one careless of suspicion
Ne fawnest for the favor of the great,
Ne fearest foolish reprehension
Of faulty men, which danger to thee threat,
But freely dost of what thee list entreat
Like a great lord of peerless liberty ;
Lifting the good up to high honour's seat ;
And the evil damning ever more to die ;
For life and death is in thy doomful writing,
So thy renown lives ever by enditing."

To Gabriel Harvey Spenser was "a devoted friend during life ;" and this devotion to one who was by no means so immaculate in taste as Spenser supposes him to be, was rather dangerous to the development of the poet's genius. Harvey was the leader of that school who wished to make English verse conform to classical rules. To this unpatriotic and mistaken school Spenser for some short time belonged, and wrote some poems under its influence.

" Unhappie verse, the witnesse of my unhappy state,
Make thyself fluttering wings of thy fast flying
Thought, and fly forth unto my Love wheresoe'er she be."

Attempts such as this at trimetre iambics, together with other "unhappie verse," the results of his efforts at writing English hexameters, were later turned into ridicule by him. Even whilst under the influence of the school he seems half conscious that these efforts were not successful or promising. "I like your English hexameter so exceedingly well," he writes to Harvey, "that I also enure my pen sometime in that kind, which I find indeed, as I have often heard you defend in word, neither so hard nor so harsh but that it will easily yield itself to our mother tongue. For the only or chiefest hardness which seemeth, is in the accent, which sometime gapeth and as it were yawneth ill-favoredly, coming short of that it should, and sometimes exceeding the measure of the number as in 'Carpenter:' the middle syllable being used short in speech, when it shall be read long in verse, seemeth like a lame gosling that draweth one leg after her ; and Heaven being used short as one syllable, when it is in verse stretched out with diastole, is like a lame dog that holds up one leg."

How far Harvey's influence may have been beneficial in training and disciplining Spenser's genius—how far it was dangerous as encouraging Spenser's very strong tendency to be artificial—cannot be estimated. For any lesser mind Harvey's

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influence would have been crushing. If his genius had not known itself and been strong enough to follow its own instincts, Spenser might have followed Harvey's advice, and have taken to an art that was just coming into fashion, and thus have become an artificial playwright instead of an excellent and imaginative poet. "He was standing," says Mr. Church, "at the parting of the ways. The allegory, with all its tempting associations and machinery, with its ingenuities and pictures and boundless license to vagueness and fancy, was on one side; and on the other the drama, with its *prima facie* and superficially prosaic aspects, and its kinship to what was customary and commonplace and unromantic in human life." Spenser made nine attempts in the dramatic line; and he sent these nine comedies, composed on the model of those of Ariosto and Machiavelli and other Italians, to Gabriel Harvey in 1579, together with a portion of the *Faery Queen*. "And must you of necessity have my judgment of her indeed?" writes Gabriel Harvey in return. "To be plain, I am void of all judgment; if your Nine Comedies, whereunto, in imitation of Herodotus, you give the names of the 9 muses (and in one man's fancy not unworthily), come not nearer Ariosto's comedies, either for the fineness of plausible elocution, or the rareness of poetical invention, than that Elvish Queen doth to his *Orlando Furioso*, which notwithstanding you will needs seem to emulate and hope to overgo, as you flatly professed yourself in one of your last letters. . . . But I will not stand greatly with you in your own matters. If so be your *Fairy Queen* be fairer in your own eye than the 9 muses, and Hobgoblin run away with the garland from Apollo: mark what I say, and yet I will not say that I thought, but there is an end for this once, and fare you well, till God or some good angel put you in a better mind." Happily for posterity the "good angel" for which Harvey longed did not appear, and Spenser, instead of attempting to deal with the real world as a dramatist,—an attempt for which, by the nature of his vague fantastic mind, he was unfitted,—followed the natural bent of his genius, and imagined another and a different world, in which his fancies could wander free and unchecked.

Probably immediately after Spenser left Cambridge he came under an influence which acted as a direct stimulus to production. He met Rosalind, who inspired him with "that chivalrous devotion that not even her refusal and her preference for another could destroy." Rosalind was to Spenser what Geraldine was to Surrey and Stella to Sidney: she was to a certain extent that

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conventional object of adoration which every poet must possess as the inspirer and object of his writings:

"He loved as was his lot, a lady gent;"

but at the same time he had for her a sincere reverence and regard, which rarely allowed him to reproach her with bitterness for the disdain of his suit, as was the custom with the conventional adorer.

"Not then to her that scorned thing so base,
But to myself the blame that lookt so high;
So high her thoughts as she herself have place,
And loath each lowly thing with lofty eye.
Yet so much grace let her vouchsafe to grant
To simple swain, sith her I may not love:
Yet that I may her honor paravant,
And praise her worth, though far my wit above,
Such grace shall be some guerdon for the grief,
And long affliction which I have endured."

In 1580 her image was for a moment obscured by an "altera Rosalinda," who is saluted by Harvey as "Domina Immerito mea bellissima Colina Clouta." But we soon cease to hear of her, and the old Rosalind again resumes her sway, never to be again deposed. The remembrance of this early love still remains strongly with him, even after his marriage in 1594 to a lady to whom he was deeply and sincerely attached. His feeling for Rosalind gave Spenser a theme. "The unknown Rosalind had given an impulse to the young poet's powers, and a colour to his thoughts, and had enrolled Spenser in that band and order of poets,—with one exception, not the greatest order,—to whom the wonderful passion of love, in its heights and in its depths, is the element on which their imagination works, and out of which it moulds its most beautiful and characteristic creations."

"For Love is Lord of truth and Loyalty,
Lifting himself out of the lowly dust
On golden plumes up to the purest sky.
. . . . .
Such is the power of that sweet passion,
That it all sordid basenesse doth expell,
And the refined mind doth newly fashion
Unto a fairer form."—*An Hymne to Love.*

It was probably in 1579 that Spenser contracted another great friendship of his life, which had a powerful influence on his career. Sir Philip Sidney, "the noble and virtuous gentleman most worthy of all titles of learning and chivalry," had

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recognised the unusual genius of Spenser, and Spenser in his turn was fascinated by the attractive personality, the noble and beautiful character, of Sidney. By him he was introduced to his uncle the Earl of Leicester, and also to the Queen. Thus he was brought altogether into that atmosphere of the court, which, although from some aspects refined and noble, had its affected and artificial side. Happily, Spenser was soon removed from these surroundings, which might have proved dangerous to his genius. In 1580 he went to Ireland as secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton.

Ireland was at that time a serious danger to England. Elizabeth, with characteristic parsimony, had increased the difficulty by refusing to allow enough money to her deputies to suppress insurrections with a strong hand, and thus establish respect for England's authority. She had recourse to means which proved only of temporary success, and sowed lasting seeds of discontent and turbulence. She took advantage of the enmity of rival chieftains to dispense with the necessity of sending men and money over to Ireland. In their own interest, therefore, to gratify personal revenge, Irish chieftains would fight the Queen's battles, suppressing rebellion for a time, but in the end augmenting the widespread anarchy of the unhappy island. Added to internal dissensions was the disturbing fact that Philip of Spain looked upon Ireland as a convenient means of harassing England. Only when this fact became apparent did Elizabeth see the real urgency of the situation, and, overcoming her habitual inclination to parsimony, granted to her deputies full power and adequate supplies. Two years before Lord Grey was appointed deputy, Sir Henry Sidney had held the office, and, in spite of wisdom and firmness, had entirely failed to preserve order. Then Ireland had been left to the local administration, and its state became worse than ever. "No governor shall do any good here," wrote an English observer, "except he show himself a Tamerlane." Lord Grey, a stern Puritan, thought that he saw in Ireland the great struggle going on between the true faith Protestantism, championed by England, and Antichrist, represented by Philip of Spain, the champion of Catholicism. With the furious zeal of a religious bigot he dealt with the rebellious Irish, the helpless colleagues of Philip. "If taking of cows and killing of kerns and churles had been worth advertising," he writes to the Queen, "I would have had every day to have troubled your highness." His cruel and merciless behaviour towards the Irish, which he in his own

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mind justified as the righteous conduct of a crusader against wrong, eventually brought down upon him the censure of the English Government.

Recorded among his services to the Government is the slaying of "1485 chief men and gentlemen, not accounting those of meaner sort, nor yet executions by law, and killing of churls, which were unnumerable." In 1582 he was recalled. Spenser had been with him through all: he had been with him at the surrender of Smerwick, when 600 Spaniards were massacred in cold blood: he had witnessed all the cruelties which Lord Grey had thought it his duty to inflict on the helpless Irish; and through all Spenser had admired him. He was to Spenser the embodiment of all that was just and strong and sincere; he was as much Spenser's ideal of life from the stronger and sterner side, as was Sidney from the brighter and lighter side. Like Lord Grey, he saw only one side of the struggle in Ireland: it was to him but a crusade of the right against the wrong: he and Lord Grey looking on, while the English soldiers murdered right and left, felt as much in the right as did the Jews in the massacring the Jebusites or the Hivites. Stern, however, as were the facts of life with which Spenser was first brought face to face in Ireland, they did not in their horror oppress or overwhelm the fantastic imagination of the poet: they rather gave body and colour to his imaginative world. The struggle of virtue and vice in the *Faery Queen* naturally had distinctness and vividness given to it by the remembrance, the scenes and experiences, of his Irish life.

Spenser did not return to England with Lord Grey in the spring of 1581. He had been appointed Clerk of Decrees and Recognisances in the Irish Court of Chancery. It was not till later that he again became directly connected with England and her interests. A plan for the planting of Munster had been started before the Rebellion, and after Desmond had been crushed it was again revived; and when Spenser succeeded Ludovic Bryskett as Clerk to the Council of Munster, he was thus brought into communication with the powerful English noblemen who were on this council, and with those who were interested in the scheme of colonisation, among whom were Sir Christopher Hatton, Walsingham, and Sir Walter Raleigh. The latter made an important epoch in the life of Spenser. Since about the year 1586 Spenser had lived at the Castle of Kilcolman, a half-ruined house of the Desmonds, granted to him by the council probably through the interest of some of his friends. In this castle,

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situated on the margin of a small lake, and overlooking a dreary tract of country, Spenser wrote his *Faery Queen*. His fantastic imagination was fostered by solitude. Some minds, such, for instance, as that of the American Hawthorne, develop in their solitude weird and dusky, almost morbid, fancies: Spenser's imagination became more fantastic, more distant from the real world, but it remained always bright and healthy. Sadness and melancholy as moods never seem to take possession of him: when he is sad or melancholy it is always from some external cause. In solitude he found the healthy conditions of his genius: active life—the life of the court in England—would have jarred his sensitive nerves, and have torn the delicate web of his fancy. Thus he always returned gladly to the lonely house at Kilcolman.

In 1589 Raleigh came to Ireland after his unprofitable expedition to Lisbon and his temporary disgrace with the Queen, during the ascendency of Essex. He came to look after his estates, his lawsuits, the carrying out of further schemes, and it chanced that he visited Spenser, who was his neighbour, at Kilcolman. "He gan," says Spenser,

> "To cast great liking to my lore
> And great disliking to my luckless lot,
> That banisht had myself, like wight forlore,
> Into that waste where I was quite forgot.
> . . . . . .
> He me persuaded forth with him to fare.
> Nought took I with me, but mine oaten quill,
> Small needments else need shepherd to prepare.
> So to the sea we came; the sea that is
> A world of waters heaped up on high,
> Rolling like mountains in wide wilderness:
> Horrible, hideous, roaring with hoarse crie."
>
> *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe.*

In 1590, therefore, taking with him the three first books of the *Faery Queen*, he went to England with Raleigh, who—for some reason restored to favour—introduced him at court, and instructed him in the art of flattery, which was so necessary to one who would gain the favour of the Virgin Queen. It was not long before Spenser was a proficient in the art, and could write in adequate verse of "the matchless beauty," the "pure perfection," the consummate poetic talent, of this Queen, for whom no flattery was too gross. In *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe* he sings of her brilliant court, of the beauty of its

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ladies, of the bravery and courtesy of its knights; but he had also seen the duller aspects of it. His Puritan nature was jarred by the affectation, the want of sincerity, the struggle for fame and favour, that went on there.

> "Where each one seeks with malice, and with strife,
> To thrust down others into foul disgrace
> Himself to raise: and he doth soonest rise
> That best can handle his deceitful wit
> In subtle shifts, and finest sleights devise,
> Either by slandering his well deemed name
> Through leasings lewd, and fained forgerie,
> Or else by breeding him some blot of blame,
> By creeping close into his secrecy.
> . . . . .
> Whiles single Truth and simple Honestie
> Do wander up and down despised of all;
> Their plain attire such glorious gallantry
> Disdaines so much, that none them on doth call."

In appreciation, perhaps, of his real merit,—certainly pleased with the poet's flattery,—Elizabeth gave to Spenser a pension of £50 a year, which her parsimonious Lord Treasurer, it is said, made many difficulties about paying.

Spenser stayed in England about a year and a half, hoping, it is thought, for the gift of some larger pension or some office from his great friends. But they were busy with their own schemes, and apparently left Spenser to eat out his heart with fruitless waiting.

> "Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
> Hath brought to court, to sue for hadywist
> That few have found, and many one hath mist.
> Full little knowest thou that hast not tried
> What hell it is in suing long to bide;
> To lose good days, that might be better spent;
> To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
> To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
> To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
> To have thy Princes' grace, yet want her Peeres;
> To have thy asking yet wait many years;
> To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares;
> To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs;
> To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
> To spend, to give, to want, to be undone;
> Unhappie wight, borne to disastrous end,
> That doth his life in so long tendance spend."
>
> *Mother Hubbard's Tale.*

In 1591 Spenser returned to Ireland. In 1594 he married a lady of whom all we know is that her name is Elizabeth—

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"My love, my life's best ornament,
By whom my spirit out of dust was raised."

To her he wrote his sonnets. From them we gather that it was some time before she would listen to him; the first sonnets are the rather ordinary and commonplace expressions of the conventional agony of the lover—

"So do I weep and wail and plead in vain,
Whiles she as steel and flint doth still remain."

When she relents he blesses his lot

"that was so lucky placed,
But then the more your own mishap I rue,
That are so much by so mean love embased."

He resolves that in return for her love he will make her immortal by his verse—

"One day I wrote her name upon the strand;
But came the waves and washed it away;
Again I wrote it with a second hand;
But came the tide and made my pains his prey.
Vain man, said she, that dost in vain assay
A mortal thing so to immortalize;
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eke my name be wiped out likewise.
Not so, quod I; let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame;
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.
Where, when as death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live and later life renew."

For some years he lived quietly, and probably happily, with his wife at Kilcolman; but in 1598 the rebellion, stirred up by Tyrone in Ulster in 1594, reached Munster. Tyrone sent a force into Munster, and the province rose. Shortly before Spenser had been appointed sheriff of the county. He was therefore a marked man, besides possessing an estate that belonged to the old Earl of Desmond. Kilcolman was sacked and burned. Spenser himself and his wife escaped; but Ben Jonson records that Spenser's youngest child perished in the flames. He came over to England, and perhaps, ruined and heartbroken as he was, he welcomed that shade

"Unbodied, unsoul'd, unheard, unseen,"

that came to him on January 16, 1599. Jonson says "he died for lack of bread in King Street (Westminster), and refused

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20 pieces sent him by my Lord of Essex, saying that he had no time to spend them." He was buried in Westminster, near the grave of Chaucer, "that sacred, happy spirit," who had been one of the great inspirations of his life,

"Who taught me, homely as I am, to make."

Spenser's works fall into two great groups, each corresponding to the two great divisions of his life. From 1576 till 1580 Spenser was in England writing as a comparatively unemancipated poet, still under the oppressive classical influences represented by his friend Harvey, and those still more stultifying and artificial influences of chivalry and the court. Nevertheless it was in this period that he produced *The Shepherd's Calendar*, which, as Mr. Lowell says, marks a new epoch in poetry as much as did the poetry of Thomson and Collins, following on the conventional productions of the eighteenth century school. Yet it was not till he was in Ireland, living in that comparative seclusion which allowed his imagination free play, that he achieved his best work—that he allowed his genius to follow its own instincts, and thus to accomplish a poem which had not only freshness of style and beauty of versification to recommend it, but also the finer colouring, deeper thought and imagination, which belongs to freer and maturer genius.

From 1576 to 1580 Spenser's writings may on the whole be said to be tentative, giving indeed promise, but, contrasted with his maturer works, comparatively emancipated. He was in this period an excellent court-poet, pleasing by his beautiful verse and delicate fancy. The fetters of eighteenth century convention were perhaps not stronger than were those of Elizabethan chivalry; and it was difficult for Spenser to struggle against them, and from a certain point of view he never did really throw them off. Spenser's genius always had its peculiar fantastic vision of things: it might always perhaps be called artificial, in the sense of never being able to view things as they really were: the difference between him in his first and second period is that in the first he looked at the world with the eyes of his generation, making it of course fresher and more charming by the strength of his genius; while in the second period he made his own illusions, wove his web of fancy for himself. Though he never could see the world and the people in it as they really were,—though he never had the highest power of an artist, the capacity for idealising the true and the actual,—yet he made for himself

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a charming, fantastic, pure, and ideal world, which his genius also makes real for those who follow him.

Spenser's first ventures in verse are some translations of sonnets by Petrarch, and some "Visions" by Joachim du Bellay. They were written probably in the transition time between school and college, and appeared in a strange and miscellaneous collection, called by the collector, John Vander Noodt, "a theatre wherein be represented as well the miseries and calamities which follow the voluptuous worldlings, as also the great joys and pleasures which the Faithful do enjoy—an argument both profitable and delectable to all that sincerely love the word of God."

It was probably at Sidney's house at Penshurst that *The Shepherd's Calendar* was written, but it was pure friendship and not merely gratitude for hospitality, and a desire to pay the tribute due from a dependant to a patron, that caused Spenser to dedicate it to Sir Philip Sidney. In the prefatory letter addressed to Gabriel Harvey, Edward Kirke speaks with great scorn of the "rout of our ragged rhymers (for so themselves use to hunt the letter) which without learning boast, without judgment jangle, without reason, rage and foam as if some instinct of poetical spirit had newly ravished them above the meanness of common capacity." The new poet that he introduces will appeal to intelligent and judicious readers, "by his wittiness in devising, his pithiness in uttering, his complaints of love so lovely, his discourses of pleasure so pleasantly, his pastoral rudeness, his moral wiseness, his due observing of decorum everywhere, in personages, in seasons, in matter, in speech, and generally in all seemly simplicitie of handling his matters, and framing his words." On the latter point, however, critics were not agreed. Sir Philip Sidney found much true poetry in these eclogues, but the rustic language he could not "allow," all good classic authorities of the pastoral condemning it. Ben Jonson, however, said that Guarini, the Spanish pastoral dramatic writer, "kept not decorum in making shepherds speak as well as himself could."

There are two reasons for this choice by a pastoral writer of rustic language: he may choose it either because it is more on a level with the speakers, who are supposed to be shepherds and shepherdesses, or because he wishes to find rare and unhackneyed words. The latter was probably Spenser's object, if we may judge from E. K.'s argument. "But as in most exquisite pictures they use to blaze and portray not only the dainty lineaments of beauty, but also round about it to shadow the

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rude thickets and craggy clefts, that by the baseness of such parts, more excellencie may accrue to the principal: for oftentimes we find ourselves, I know not how, singularly delighted with the shew of such natural rudeness, and take great pleasure in disorderly order. Even so do these rough and harsh terms enlumine and make more clearly to appear, the brightness of brave and glorious words. So oftentimes a discord in music maketh a comely concordance: so great delight took the worthy poet Alceus to behold a blemish in the joint of a well-shaped body.

"Now as touching the general purpose of his Eclogues, I mind not to say much, himself labouring to conceal it, only this appeareth that his unstaid youth had long wandered in the common labyrinth of love, in which time to mitigate or allay the heat of his passion or else to warn (as he saith) the young shepherds, his equals and companions, of his unfortunate folly, he compiled these 12 eclogues, which for that they be proportioned to the state of the 12 months, he termeth it *Shepherd's Calendar*, applying an old name to a new work." Nobody could be better adapted than Spenser at this time of his life for success as a pastoral writer, the pastoral being regarded as a purely artificial form of art. His great power was in creating artificial worlds of fancy, and making their unnaturalness and extravagance charming. But unfortunately in his eclogues he followed the example of Clement Marot, the poet of the French reformers, and he made his pastoral the vehicle for satire on the Church and the clergy. He borrowed from Skelton the name of Colin Clout, Colin Clout having been made by Skelton the embodiment of opposition to the luxury and self-seeking of ecclesiastics. Except that the pastoral was concerned with flocks and shepherds, nothing could be more unfit than to imbue it with such significance, its ideal being the remoteness of its imaginary life from the life of the world. Nothing therefore could be more artificial than the matter of the first long poem which Spenser wrote. His satire, too, was of the crudest kind. In the Fifth Eclogue, under the persons of two shepherds, Piers and Palinode, he represented "2 forms of pastors or ministers, or the Protestant or the Catholic: whose chief talk standeth in reasoning whether the life of the one must be like the other; with whom having showed that it is dangerous to maintain any fellowship or to give too much credit to their colourable and fained good will, he telleth them a tale of the Fox that by such a counterpoint of craftiness, deceived and

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devoured the credulous kid." The merit of this eclogue is in the telling of the story, which is done simply and clearly and quaintly, and, together with the tale of the Oak and the Briar in the Eclogue for February, gives testimony to the fact that Spenser could narrate a short story, though he had not that grander gift of narration which makes an epic poet.

But it was not the matter of *The Shepherd's Calendar* that gives it such an important place in the history of poetry: it was its manner and its style. Happily only in a few eclogues did Spenser indulge in a vein of satire which would eventually have landed him in a didactic strain unsuited to his genius. In the other and more purely pastoral eclogues his style is fresh and light and vigorous, nearly free from the affectation of the time, which consisted either in pedantry, or in the alliteration and antithesis and elaborations of Euphuism. The Eclogue for March, in which two shepherds' boys, "taking occasion of the season, begin to make purpose of love and other pleasaunce which to spring time is most agreeable," is specially charming, written as it is in that fresh vigorous manner which distinguished Spenser as "the new poet." Thomalin relates how he was wounded by Cupid:—

"It was upon a holiday,
When shepherd's grooms have leave to play,
I cast to go a shooting;
Long wandring up and down the land
With bow and bolts in either hand
For birds in bushes tooting,
At length within the ivy todde
(There shrouded was the little god)
I heard a busy bustling."

The lament for the unkindness of Rosalind runs of course all through the *Calendar*. Hobbinol (in the April Eclogue) complains of "that boye's Colin Clout's great misaventure in love; whereby his mind was alienated and withdrawn not only from him, who most loved him, but also from all former delights and studies, as well in pleasant piping as cunning rhyming and singing, and other his laudable exercises." The poem closes with the Eclogue for December, in which Colin makes his complaint to the god Pan. In the spring of his life, he says, he was fresh and vigorous, like that season of the year:

"Whilome in youth when flowered my joyful spring
Like swallow swift I wandered here and there;
For heat of heedless lust me so did sting
That I oft doubted danger had no fear,

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I went the wasteful woods and forests wide
Withouten dread of wolves to be espied.

. . . . . .

How often have I scaled the craggy oak,
All to dislodge the raven of her nest?
How have I wearied with many a stroke
The stately walnut tree, the while the rest
Under the tree fell all for nuts at strife,
For lief to me was libertie and life."

But the summer of his life, his manhood, "was consumed with great heat and excessive drouth, caused through a comet or blazing star, by which he meaneth love." Then lastly came his old age, like "to winter's chill and frosty season."

"Winter is come that blows the bitter blast,
And after winter dreary death doth hast.

"Gather together ye my little flock,
My little flock that was to me so lief;
Let me, ah! let me in your folds ye lock,
Ere the breme winter breed you greater grief.
Winter is come, that blows the baleful breath,
And after winter cometh timely death.

"Adieu, Delightes, that lulled me asleep;
Adieu, my Dear, whose love I bought so dear;
Adieu, my little Lambs and loved sheep;
Adieu, ye Woodes, that oft my witness were;
Adieu, good Hobbinol, that was so true,
Tell, Rosalind, her Colin bids her adieu."

"Spenser's mature hand," says Mr. Lowell, "is first seen in the *Muiopotmos*, the most airily fanciful of his poems—a marvel for delicate conception and treatment, whose breezy verse seems to float between a blue sky and golden earth in imperishable sunshine." Only Spenser could have told so well this story of a butterfly and his sad fate; only Spenser could make those endless digressions concerning the origin of his beauty, and of the ugliness of his murderer Aragnoll, without being dull and wearisome; how Venus, jealous of her maid Astery, whom she sent with her other maidens to gather flowers, because Cupid

"Did lend his secret aid in gathering
Into her lap the children of the spring,"

turned her into a butterfly;

"And all those flowers, with which so plenteously
Her lap she filled had, that bred her spite,
She placed in her wings for memory

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Of her pretended crime, though crime none were :
Since which time she them in her wings doth bear."

Clarion in his beauty flies to the "gay gardens"

"To spoil the pleasures of that Paradise,
The wholesome saulge and lavender still grey,
Rank smelling rue, and cummin good for eyes,
The rose reigning in the Pride of May.
. . . . . .
Cool violets and orpine growing still,
Embathed balm and cheerful galingale,
Fresh costmarie and breathful camomile,
Dull poppy and drink quick'ning setuale.
. . . . . .
What more felicitie can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with liberty
And to be lord of all the works of nature,
To reign in the air from th' earth to highest sky,
To feed on flowers and weeds of glorious feature,
To take whatever thing doth please the eye."

But Aragnoll, son of Arachne, "the most fine-fingered work-woman on ground," who had proudly challenged Pallas to a trial of skill, and, being beaten, became through envy a venomous ugly creature,

"Lay lurking covertly him to surprize."

And Clarion perishes, caught in meshes of which he had no suspicion as he wandered to and fro in the pride of his freedom.

Muiopotmos, together with other poems by Spenser, were published in 1591. Among these poems are *The Ruines of Time*, dedicated to the Countess of Pembroke, a poem on the death of Sir Philip Sidney, full of laments over

"The vain world's glory and unstedfast state.
. . . . . .
Why then doth flesh, a bubble-glass of breath,
Hunt after honor and advancement vain,
And rear a trophy for devouring death,
With so great labor and long lasting pain,
As if his days for ever should remain ?
Sith all that in this world is great or gay
Doth as a vapour vanish or decay."

Lasting fame is only to be found in the poet's verses :—

"For deeds do die, however nobly done,
And thoughts of men do as themselves decay ;
But wise words taught in numbers for to run,
Recorded by the muses live for ay :
Nor may with stormy showers be wash't away

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The bitter-breathing winds with harmful blast,
Nor age nor envie shall them ever wast."

In *The Tears of the Muses* each of the nine laments the neglect of her special art, and the degeneracy of the time which has nothing to leave to fame :—

"The nurse of virtue I am hight
And golden trumpet of eternity,
That lowly thoughts lift up to heaven's height,
And mortal men have power to deify.
. . . . . .
But now I will my golden chariot rend,
And will henceforth immortalize no more,
Sith I no more find worthie to commend
For prize of value or for learned lore."

Such is the lament of Calliope; and the whole tone of the poem is that of a poet embittered by the neglect of true art and by indiscriminate admiration given to what is not worthy the name of poetry—

"Heaps of huge words up-hoarded hideously
With horrid sound though having little sense."

Mother Hubbard's Tale, also included in this collection, was, he says, in the introduction to Lady Compton, "long sithens composed in the raw conceit of my youth." "It is a vigorous poem after the manner of Chaucer, showing considerable boldness in the directness of the satire." The Fox and the Ape, in the course of their adventures, bring forward the other aspect of that court, which, viewed as the residence of the great Gloriana, had such brilliancy and glamour thrown over it. It is perhaps a confirmation of the truth of Spenser's lament in *The Tears of the Muses* concerning the neglect of literature, and the little importance in which it was held, that a poem which was fierce in its invective against the treacheries, the vain shows, the intrigues, the jealousies, and the rivalries of the court, and against impostors who mounted to high places in the State, should attract so little notice as to bring down upon it no censures. The Puritan sincerity of Spenser is obvious in this poem; but Puritans were only punished when their opinions were dangerous to the State: such opinions Spenser never held: his religion gave him his earnestness and sincerity, but it never led him to desire to be a reformer in matters of creed and observance. (Included in this collection were Virgil's "Gnat;" "The Ruines of Rome," by Bellay; "Visions of the World's Vanitie;" Bellay's "Visions;" and Petrarch's "Visions.")

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That the insincerity and hollowness of court life did indeed oppress him is abundantly testified by his poem, *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe*, written on his return to Ireland in 1591. The incongruity of the brilliant externals of the court, with its sordid inner life, the mask of courtliness and chivalry that hid so much that was mean and base, pained and distressed him.

But it is not in satire or in lament that Spenser excels: it is when he frees himself from the pressure of facts, and gives his imagination free rein, as in the *Prothalamion*, the *Epithalamion*, the *Hymns to Love and Beauty*, and in his greatest work of all, the *Faery Queen*, that he is most truly himself. Then it is that we feel Spenser's real spirit, his delicate, refined chivalry, which was indeed a religion to him, in its worship of Beauty, which meant to him something divine. "Beauty, the burning lamp of heaven's light"—

> "... through infusion of celestial power
> The duller earth it quickneth with delight.
> . . . . . .
> But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray
> That light proceeds . . .
> Shall never be extinguisht nor decay;
> . . . . . .
> For it is heavenly borne and cannot die,
> Being a parcel of the purest sky."

And in the *Epithalamion* we feel the power and beauty of his expression, of that delicate, musical verse of which he was the master:—

> "Ah, when will this long weary day have end
> And lend me leave to come unto my love?
> How slowly do the hours their numbers spend!
> How slowly does sad time his feathers move!
> Haste thee, O Fairest planet, to thy home
> Within the western foam:
> Thy tired steeds long since have need of rest.
> Long though it be, at last I see it gloom,
> And the bright evening star with golden crest
> Appear out of the East."

The great work on which Spenser's fame rests had been begun at a very early stage in the poet's career. The *Faery Queen*, slighted by Gabriel Harvey, probably received a stimulus to its completion from a conversation which took place some time after the summer of 1584 between Spenser and certain of the principal Englishmen employed in Irish affairs. The conversation, the subject of which was the "ethical part" of moral philosophy, is

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recorded by Ludowick Bryskett, Spenser's predecessor in the service of the Council of Munster.

In the course of the conversation Bryskett said "that he greatly envied the happiness of the Italians, who have in their mother-tongue late writers that have, with a singular easy method, taught all that Plato and Aristotle have confusedly or obscurely left written. . . . Would God that some of our countrymen would shew themselves so well affected to the good of their country, as to set down in English, the precepts of those parts of moral philosophy, whereby our youth might, without spending so much time as the learning of those other languages require, speedily enter into the right course of virtuous life. . . ." Then turning to Spenser he said: "It is you, Sir, to whom it pertaineth to shew yourself courteous now unto us all and to make us all beholding unto you for the pleasure and profit which we shall gather from your speeches, if you shall vouchsafe to open unto us the goodly cabinet, in which this excellent treasure of virtues lieth locked up from the vulgar sort." . . . "I doubt not," answered Spenser, "but with the consent of most part of you, I shall be excused at this time of this task which would be laid upon me: for sure I am that it is not unknown to you that I have already undertaken a work to the same effect, which is in heroical verse under the title of the *Faery Queen* to represent all the moral virtues, assigning to every virtue a knight to be the patron and defender of the same, in whose actions and feats of arms and chivalry the operations of that virtue, whereof he is the protector, are to be expressed, and the vices and unruly appetites that oppose themselves against the same to be beaten down and overcome. Which work, as I have already well entered into, if God shall please to spare me life that I may finish it according to my mind, your wish (Mr. Bryskett) will be in some sort accomplished, though perhaps not so effectually as you could desire." Thus Spenser in 1584 had already advanced some way with his *Faery Queen*, and in 1590, going to England with Raleigh, he published the first three books. In 1596 he published three more books, and these, with two cantos and two stanzas of a seventh book found after his death, are all that we have of the twelve books that he contemplated writing.

In the first parcel are contained the legends of Holiness, of Temperance, and of Chastity; in the second parcel are the legends of Friendship, of Justice, of Courtesy. The seventh book was probably intended to contain the legend of Constancy, the fragments that we have of it being entitled "of Mutability."

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At Raleigh's suggestion Spenser prefixed to his poem an explanatory letter, emphasizing the object and the plan of the book. Probably Raleigh felt, as all Spenser's readers must, that the point of the whole, owing to the many stories and endless digressions, was so often overwhelmed and obscured, that the reader needed to have some clue by which to find his way about. "The general end therefore of all the book," says Spenser, "is to fashion a gentleman, a noble person, in virtuous and gentle discipline, which for that I conceived should be most plausible and pleasing, being colored with an historical fiction,—the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter than for profit of the ensample, I chose the history of King Arthur. . . . I labor to portray in Arthur, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private moral virtues as Aristotle hath devised. . . ." That enjoyment should be the end and aim of a poem was so very contrary to the views of the time, that Spenser did wisely, if he wished to gain popularity, in emphasizing the fact that his poem had a serious moral purpose—that his were not merely

> "Idle rimes,
> The labor of lost time and wit unstaid;"

but that

> "If their deeper sense be only weighed,
> And the dim veil, with which from common view
> Their fairer parts are hid, aside be laid,
> Perhaps not vain they may appear to you."

It was thus he attempted to propitiate Lord Burghley, who hated him, and to whom he alludes in a less conciliatory frame of mind at the beginning of the fourth book—

> "The rugged forehead that with grave foresight
> Welds kingdoms, causes, and affairs of state,
> My looser rimes, I wote, doth sharply wite.
> . . . . . .
> Such ones ill judge of love, that cannot love,
> Nor in their frozen hearts feel kindly flame.
> . . . . . .
> To such therefore I do not sing at all;
> But to that sacred saint my sovereign queen."

Conscious that much might be found in his poem that could not be justified by its connection with any moral purpose, he turned for thorough appreciation to a less Puritanic audience. To Elizabeth, who found herself flattered as much as her insatiable

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vanity could desire under the names of Belphœbe, Gloriana, Cynthea, Mercilla, as

> "The maiden queen that shone as Titan's ray,
> In glistering gold and peerless precious stone,
> Yet her bright blazing beauty did assay
> To dim the brightness of her glorious throne,
> As envying herself that too exceeding shone,"

he dedicated his great work "to live with the eternitie of her fame." "The claim was a proud one," says Mr. Church, "but it has proved a prophecy." The *Faery Queen* will rank always among the great poems of English literature. And it does this, not because of its allegory, not because of its obscure moral purpose, but because of the interest and charm of its imaginary world, and, above all, because of its perfect, delicate, and harmonious verse. Spenser's allegory or "dark conceit" might well indeed have been omitted. It is fairly clear in the first three books; in the first book he is quite successful in keeping the episodes in subordination to the general plan. Una, the Truth, followed by her lion, innocent and pure, and strong in her single-heartedness to tame wild beasts and "salvage nations," is the object of the Red Cross Knight. Most of his adventures are significant: his defection through the wiles of Duessa, who counterfeits the appearance of Truth; his resistance to the temptations of Despair—

> "Then do no further go, no further stray,
> But here lie down, and to thy rest betake,
> Th' ill to prevent, that life ensewen may.
> . . . . . .
> The longer life, I wote the greater sin;
> The greater sin, the greater punishment;"

his purification in the House of Holiness—

> "And bitter penance with an iron whip
> Was wont him once to disple every day,
> And sharp remorse his heart did prick and nip,
> That drops of blood thence like a well did play,
> And sad repentance used to embay
> His body in salt water smarting sore;"

and lastly comes the less difficult because more open struggle with the wicked Apocalyptic Beast and Dragon. Thus he saves the Truth, and becomes united to her for life.

In the second book Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, fights with the personifications of the evil passions that beset the soul

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of man: he binds Fury; he resists immodest Mirth; he is led down by Mammon to see his secret store—on the way he passes

> "Cruel Revenge and rancorous Despight,
> Disloyal Treason and heartburning Hate;
> But gnawing Jealousy, out of their sight,
> Sitting alone, his bitter lips did bite."

He resists the temptations of Acrasia in the bower of Bliss. This is the last and greatest of his temptations. Spenser describes, with all the power and skill of his beauty-loving mind, that world of delight and luxury,—"the most dainty paradise on ground."

> "Goodly beautified,
> With all the ornaments of Flora's pride,
> Wherewith her mother Art, as half in scorn
> Of niggard nature, like a pompous bride,
> Did deck her."

The third book has somewhat the same moral as the second; but Britomart instead of Guyon fights the battle of purity—

> "Lifting up her brave heroic thought
> 'Bove woman's weakness."

Already in the second book Spenser shows a tendency to interrupt the thread of the story with digressions. In Canto X. he gives a chronicle of British kings. In the third book he begins to lose not only the thread of the allegory, but the thread of the story; and in the fourth, fifth, and sixth books he seems to lose sight of the moral purpose altogether. But although this may have appeared as a defect to Spenser's generation, it by no means lessens the value of the *Faery Queen* in the eyes of posterity. It was impossible for a mind like Spenser's to give unity and continuity to a long poem of this kind, even with the help of allegory, for the allegory had not really taken hold of him: he regarded it as an appendage.

To a later Puritan—Bunyan—the order of the moral world was all imaged forth with the clearness of strong moral vision: he saw it in everything that he contemplated, and thus to the story of the soul's pilgrimage everything is subordinate. But to Spenser the details of his imaginary world were infinitely interesting and absorbing: he forgot that he had to follow the struggles of the human soul; his allegory is often a difficulty. "Perhaps," says Mr. Lowell, "he adopted it only for the reason that it was in fashion, and put it on as he did his ruff, not because it was becoming but because it was the wear." Certain

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it is that as we read further and further in the *Faery Queen* we find it falling more and more into the background, almost forgotten in the wonderful sights and adventures of Fairyland.

As the poem advances the story is still further troubled by definite political allusions. Philip of Spain appears as the son of Geryon, as the Soldan, as Grantorto. Sir Bourbon, "in dangerous distress of a rude rout," is Henry of Navarre, kept from his throne because a Protestant. The trial of Duessa is so distinctly the trial of Mary Queen of Scots that James VI. thought it due to his royal dignity to notice these allusions to his mother, resenting that she should be represented by "Duessa, daughter of deceit and shame." That Artegall is Lord Grey de Wilton and Sir Calidore Sir Philip Sidney there can be little doubt. The idea of the Knight of Justice, who unswervingly followed what he thought to be his duty, to whom nothing was so sacred as his plighted word, displaced for a time in Spenser's imagination the ideal of the courtly chivalrous Sidney. His experience in Ireland had taught him the effectiveness and the value of the qualities of firmness and valour.

> "Dearer is love than Life, and fame than gold,
> But dearer than them both your faith once plighted hold."

It is the Knight of Justice whose struggles are hardest and least rewarded: it is his reputation that is torn to pieces by the hags Envy and Detraction, who urge on the Blatant Beast; but it is the Knight of Courtesy who leads captive the Blatant Beast and silences his venomous tongues. The so-called Justice that Lord Grey had dealt out to the Irish had, as Spenser thought, been cruelly misrepresented, and Lord Grey himself unjustly treated. His fame had been blasted by the Blatant Beast and his attendant hags.

But it is neither the allegory nor the political allusions, nor even the story, that make the great charm of the *Faery Queen*. The interest of the story is that rather absorbing yet comparatively vulgar interest which the modern world finds in the Arabian Nights' Tales, and which the feudal world found in the chivalrous romances; it is the interest that comes from following strange adventure, the fortunes of brave and beautiful persons, with their changing surroundings—at one time gorgeous glittering palaces, at another gloomy and horrible dungeons: all this, without any search for deeper significance, suffices to afford interest of a certain kind. We are interested in golden-haired Britomart, who, looking one day into Merlin's mirror, saw the vision of a

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knight, so splendid and so great, that her peace was henceforward troubled by love for him, and she set out to seek him. We are interested in the "Salvage Man, match'd with the lady fair," who walk together for a short time through fairyland; in "Pastorella," brought up a shepherd maid, who is carried off by brigands, who eventually is rescued and carried to the castle of a lord and lady, who prove to be her father and mother. But far greater than the interest of the story, which, after all, is told after the manner of chivalrous romances, and is full of monotonous incidents, hopelessly wanting in unity, with numberless digressions, is the varied charm of the verse. Spenser, in describing the sights and sounds of his fairyland, makes us realise his little world, because his language and his verse are full of the feeling and colour of his thought. He makes us feel how beautiful was Belphœbe, the virgin of spotless fame—

> "Upon her eyelids many graces sat
> Under the shadow of her even brows.
>
> . . . .
>
> Her yellow locks, crisped like golden wire
> About her shoulders weren loosely shed,
> And when the wind amongst them did inspire
> They waved like a pennon wide dispred,
> And low behind her back were scattered;
> And whether Art it were or heedless hap,
> As through the flowering forest rash she fled,
> In her rude heares sweet flowers themselves did lap,
> And flourishing fresh leaves and blossoms did enwrap."

We see Britomart taking off her helmet, her golden hair falling around her—

> "Which doft, her golden locks, which were upbound
> Still in a knot, unto her heels down-traced,
> And like a silken veil in compass round
> About her back and all her body wound;
> Like as the shining sky in summer's night,
> What time the days with scorching heat abound,
> Is creasted all with lines of fiery light."

He takes us to the palace of Morpheus—

> "And, more to lull him in his slumber soft,
> A trickling stream from high rock tumbling down,
> And ever-drizzling rain upon the loft;
> Mist with a murmuring wind, much like the sowne
> Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swowne.
> No other noise, nor people's troublous cries,
> As still are wont to annoy the walled town,
> Might there be heard: but careless quiet lies
> Wrapt in eternal silence far from enemies;"

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to the bower of bliss—

"The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempered sweet;
Th' angelical soft trembling voices made
To th' instruments divine respondence meet;
The silver-sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmur of the waters fall;
The waters fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call,
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all."

Then, too, he makes real the horrors of the dark regions below the earth: he follows Duessa and Night to hell—

"To the black shadows of the Stygian shore,
Where wretched ghosts sit wailing evermore."

He goes with Mammon past the river Cocytus,

"In which full many souls do endless wail and weep;"

and, looking down,

"saw many damned wights
In those sad waves, which direful deadly stanke,
Plonged continuelly of cruel sprights;
That with their piteous cries and yelling shrightes
They made the further shore resounden wide."

He sees Tantalus—

"Deep was he drenched to the upmost chin,
Yet gaped still as coveting to drink
Of the cold liquor which he waded in.
And, stretching forth his hand, did often think
To reach the fruit which grew upon the brink;
But both the fruit from hand and flood from mouth
Did fly aback, and made him vainly swinck;
The whiles he sterv'd with hunger and with drouth;
He daily died, yet never throughly dyen couth."

In the *Faery Queen* we do not alone feel the poetic power and varied sensitiveness of Spenser's nature; we are always continually reminded of his noble and spiritual longings, of his admiration for what was morally beautiful and pure: his was a spirit "finely touched," uniting the worship of beauty, that belonged to the men of the Renaissance, to the worship of moral excellence, which belongs to the Puritan race. The worship of love and beauty was the inspiration of all that was best in life—

"To the highest and the worthiest
Lifteth it up."

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He longs for the "antique world," as he pictured it to himself,

"Where good was only for itself desired."

Sir Guyon, Sir Calidore, Sir Artegall, are no mere knights of chivalry: no writer of mere chivalrous romance could have imagined them: in their struggle after what was best and worthiest in life, exposed powerfully to the temptations that beset the finely-organised spirit, sensitive to beauty and joy of all kinds, Spenser reveals himself a child both of the New and Old World, whose soul was full of the spiritual purity of the Middle Age, but illumined by the glow and colour of the time of Renaissance, with its admiration of all that was human and beautiful.

His great work marks the coming of a new era, while it recalls the last: the different currents of two eras are harmonised by his genius. "A beauty issues from this harmony," says M. Taine,—"the beauty in the poet's heart which his whole work strives to express; a noble and yet a laughing beauty, made up of moral elevation and sensuous seductions, English in sentiment, Italian in externals, chivalric in its subject, modern in its perfection, representing a unique and admirable epoch, the appearance of Paganism in a Christian race, and the worship of form by an imagination of the North."

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CHAPTER V.

ELIZABETHAN ART—POETRY.

MARLOWE, Christopher, *b.* 1564, *d.* 1593.—*Hero and Leander* was left unfinished at Marlowe's death; Chapman completed it, dividing Marlowe's fragment into two parts, which now form the first two sestiads of the poem "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love," printed complete in *England's Helicon*, 1600.

SHAKSPERE, William, *b.* 1564, *d.* 1616.—*Venus and Adonis*, 1592? *Rape of Lucrece*, 1593-94? *Sonnets*, 1595-1605?

LYLY, John, *b.* 1554, *d.* 1606; BARNFIELD, 1574-1627; LODGE, Thomas, *b.* 1556, prob. *d.* 1625; GREENE, Robert, prob. 1560-1592; DANIEL, Samuel, 1562-1619; DRUMMOND, William, 1585-1649; PEELE, George, prob. *b.* 1558, died before 1598; WARNER, William, *b.* 1550, *d.* 1609; DRAYTON, Michael, about 1563-1631; DYER, Sir Edward, about 1550-1607; WOTTON, Sir Henry, 1568-1639; RALEIGH, Sir Walter, 1552-1618; GREVILLE, Fulke, Lord Brooke, 1554-1628; DAVIES, Sir John, *d.* 1625.

THE English mind having passed through its period of training and discipline—the example of the Italians, both in prose and in verse, having done its work in encouraging the study and cultivation of style—genius now broke through the rules which had tended to confine it and make it artificial, and art began to be the free spontaneous expression of the national mind. Dramatic art was of course the great product of this period, both because it was essentially the nature of the English genius to be as dramatic in art as it was philosophic in thought, and also because the sense of national unity, the consciousness of being a great people, demanded such artistic expression as can be found only in the drama or in architecture. But side by side with dramatic art was produced a vast body of poetry. This poetry Mr. Stopford Brooke divides into three divisions, each corresponding to phases in the growth of the Elizabethan mind. The first division contains love poetry and sonnets, and is the fit expression of the ardent, eager youth of the period; the second contains patriotic poems—poems expressing keen interest in the historic past of

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England, and in its national present and future, marking that maturer period of growth when the interests of life widen, and the personal ones are not all-absorbing; thirdly and lastly, come the philosophic poems, expressing the thoughts of the reflective old age of the period, when the keen enjoyment in life had passed away.

The first division is the largest: almost all the most celebrated dramatists wrote love poems and lyrics; indeed, they looked to them to be the monuments of their fame. Shakspere, in common with his contemporaries, grounded his literary fame on his *Venus and Adonis*, and on his *Lucrece*; Marlowe on his *Hero and Leander*. The drama was not then definitely considered a branch of art. Originality was so little considered in play-writing, so much of it being the revision of old plays and the adaptation of stories into plays, that it was esteemed merely a matter of business, and writers undertook it as being a remunerative profession, and trusted for fame to their sonnets and love poems. The same stigma attached to dramatists at the beginning of this period as, in still earlier days, was attached to the writers of poetry. Puttenham in his *Art of Poetry* says: "Now also of such among the nobilitie and gentry as be very well seen in many laudable sciences, and especially in making or Poesie, it is so come to pass that they have no courage to write, and if they have yet are they loath to be a knowen of their skill. So as I know very many notable gentlemen in the court that have written commendably and suppressed it again, or else suffered it to be published without their names to it: as if it were a discredit for a gentleman to seem learned and to show himself amorous of any good Art." Probably Sir Philip Sidney, Surrey, and Wyatt, who thought far more of their art than their nobility, did for the social reputation of art what Jonson, by his high moral aims, and Beaumont, by his attachment to it from a quite unprofessional point of view, did subsequently for the drama. Thus, even in this, the most unconventional and freest age of English life, did mistaken ideas drive talent to a false sphere, till its instincts becoming stronger, proved too much for convention.

Shakspere thus first recommended himself to his age as the author of two rather frigid love poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and by certain "sugared sonnets." His reputation among dramatists was that of "an upstart crow, beautified by our feathers," this being the opinion that his talent in revision and adaptation called forth. Hazlett says these two poems are like

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constructions of ice, "hard, glittering, and cold." They are indeed but the "first heirs" of Shakspere's invention; and as the last and best gift that comes to an artist in whatever sphere is simplicity and naturalness, it is unjust to expect in these love poems more than faint suggestions of the power of that genius which was so long in reaching the height of its complex development. Coleridge considers the delight in sweetness and richness of sound that Shakspere shows in the poem of *Venus and Adonis* "a highly favorable promise in the compositions of a young man." But other critics find in the harmony of his verse, and the glow of his colouring, only successful obedience to the conventional art of his day. Nothing in this poem seems to suggest the Shakspere that we know, unless it be the concluding verses,—the prophecy of Venus over the dead body of Adonis,—more alive with meaning, and therefore more impressive, than the cold verse in which Shakspere endeavoured to tell the classical story, for which he had evidently little feeling.

"Since thou art dead, lo, here I prophesy,
Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend:
It shall be waited on with jealousy,
Find sweet beginning, but unsavoury end;
Ne'er settled equally, but high or low;
That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe.

"It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud;
Bud and be blasted in a breathing-while;
The bottom poison, and the top o'erstrawed
With sweets that shall the truest sight beguile,
The strongest body shall it make most weak,
Strike the wise dumb, and teach the fool to speak.

"It shall be sparing, and too full of riot,
Teaching decrepit age to tread the measure;
The staring ruffian shall it keep in quiet,
Pluck down the rich, enrich the poor with treasure;
It shall be raging-mad, and silly-mild,
Make the young old, the old become a child.

"It shall suspect where is no cause of fear;
It shall not fear where it should most mistrust;
It shall be merciful, and too severe,
And most deceiving when it seems most just;
Perverse it shall be where it shows most toward,
Put fear to valour, courage to the coward."

In *Lucrece* there is still more of the sterner and more reflective element, sometimes very much out of place: "Lucrece in her agony delivers tirades on night, on time, on opportunity." In

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this poem, as in that of *Venus and Adonis*, one feels that the subject is foreign to the mind that is employed upon it. Although, as Prof. Dowden says, "the poet's pleasurable excitement can be perceived: nay, at times we feel the energetic fervour of his heart," yet there is no evidence from the spirit of the poem that Shakspere's genius ever really found itself at home in it. Fashion evidently dictated his choice of subject: he only satisfies his instinct for noting the significance of things by stopping occasionally to reflect. He describes the grief of Lucrece: sometimes "'tis dumb and hath no words," "sometimes 'tis mad and too much talk affords."

> "The little birds that tune their morning's joy,
> Make her moans mad with their sweet melody:
> For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy;
> Sad souls are slain in merry company;
> Grief best is pleased with grief's society:
> True sorrow then is feelingly sufficed,
> When with like semblance it is sympathised."

Much more beautiful, much more perfect as a work of art, is the part that Marlowe contributed to *Hero and Leander*. Marlowe's genius was essentially pagan and sensuous, and suited to the classic tales he versified: he shows in them "nothing of the deeper thought of the time;" no tendency to "look before and after;" no worship of a Gloriana or hostility to an Acrasia interferes with his frank acceptance of sensuous beauty and joy. . . . Marlowe's power does not lie in catching in the aspect of objects or scenes those deeper suggestions which appeal to an imagination stored with human experience as well as sensitive to colour and form, . . . his soul seems to be in his eyes: and he renders the beauty which appeals directly to sense as vividly as he apprehends."

Very characteristic of the spirit of the whole poem is that one line, which, quoted by Shakspere in *As You Like It*, constitutes all that is commonly known of *Hero and Leander*—

> "Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight."

Hero is seen by Leander sacrificing in the Temple of Venus—

> "Stone-still he stood, and evermore he gaz'd.
> . . . . . .
> It lies not in our power to love or hate,
> For will in us is over-ruled by fate.
> . . . . . let it suffice,
> What we behold is censur'd by our eyes;
> Where both deliberate the love is slight:
> Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight."

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It is true, indeed, that in this poem Marlowe's soul is in his eyes. He sees nothing more than meets the eye, but he sees that very beautifully and very vividly: and he has succeeded in writing verse which none of his great contemporaries could ever equal,—narrative verse which has a music so spontaneous and rich that, as Mr. Bradley says, Marlowe might have applied to it his own words—

> "That calls my soul from forth his living seat
> To move unto the measures of delight."

He has the power of what is called pictorial writing. Hero and Leander stand mute before each other:—

> "Thus while dumb signs their yielding hearts entangled,
> The air with sparks of living fire was spangl'd,
> And night deep-drench'd in misty Acheron
> Heav'd up her head, and half the world upon
> Breath'd darkness forth."

Hero tells Leander where she lives—

> "Far from the town (where all is whist and still,
> Save that the sea playing on yellow sand
> Sends forth a rattling murmur to the land,
> Whose sounds allure the golden Morpheus
> In silence of the night to visit us)
> My turret stands."

And Marlowe thus describes Leander's death—

> "The waves about him wound,
> And pulled him to the bottom, where the ground
> Was strew'd with pearls, and in low coral groves
> Sweet-singing mermaids sported with their loves
> In heaps of heavy gold."

Long love poems, such as those of Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakspere, were not plentiful in these days, but the age was prolific in lyrics and sonnets. Collections were formed by enterprising booksellers of the occasional verse of most of the poets of the day. Poems mostly didactic and religious are collected in the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1576. *A gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, by Proctor, 1578; *A Handful of Pleasant Delights*, by Clement Robinson, 1584; and many more,—are all collections of fashionable songs and poems. But among the most interesting are *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 1599, containing writings of Shakspere, Barnfield, Marlowe, Raleigh, and others; *England's Helicon*, containing poems of Spenser, Sidney, Brooke,

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Greene, Lodge, Marlowe; and *A Poetical Rhapsody*, 1602, edited by Francis Hanson, who himself contributed many poems. Lyly, Greene, Lodge, Shakspere, Daniel, Drummond, and especially the later dramatists, all made themselves known as writers of lyrics; indeed it would have been as well for Lyly's reputation if he had confined himself to this sphere: he is a standing proof, says Mr. Ward, of how impossible it is for an author of merely lyrical power to write a drama. It may be thought that the verse of Lyly and Lodge, and especially that of Lyly, they being known above all as Euphuists, should be placed among that of the more conventional and artificial writers who heralded the most glorious period of Elizabethan activity. But although they both moved within the sphere of Euphuism, there is a freshness and vigour about their verse which shows them to have kinship with that freer burst of artistic life which succeeded the period devoted to study of form. If their love songs are obedient to the form of the earlier period they have the tone of the later. Lyly is best known by the lyric in *Alexander and Campaspe*. It is the song of Apelles, who is the rival of Alexander for the love of Campaspe, the Theban slave—

> "Cupid and my Campaspe played
> At cards for kisses—Cupid paid.
> He stakes his quiver, bows and arrows,
> His mother's doves and teams of sparrows,
> Loses them too, then down he throws
> The coral of his lip, the rose
> Growing on's cheek (but none knows how);
> With these the crystal of his brow,
> And then the dimple of his chin—
> All these did my Campaspe win;
> At last he set her both his eyes:
> She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
> O Love, has she done this to thee,
> What shall, alas! become of me?"

Lodge surpassed even the master of degenerate Euphuism in his pastoral of *Rosalynde*, and he wrote various little songs and lyrics which prove him to have had real brilliancy and power in versifying, and very little of the Euphuistic languor and feebleness, though naturally, being a professed Euphuist, his choice of subjects and his manner of treating them was limited. His poetry has a vigour about it which is wanting to his prose productions. "As a satirist," says Mr. Gosse, "he is weak and tame; as a dramatist he is wholly without skill; as a writer of romances he is charming, but thoroughly artificial." Much

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fresher and freer and unconventional are the lyrics of Greene. "Lodge," says Mr. Gosse, "was the least boisterous of that noisy group of learned wits who, with Greene and Marlowe at their head, invaded London from the universities during the close of Elizabeth's reign." He had certainly less of that excessive vitality which Greene and Marlowe found it so hard to control, and which landed them in a wild and dissipated life, to whose general degradation and misery the whole tone of their poetry seems so opposed. "Greene was imaginatively one of the purest of idyllic dreamers . . . there was an absolute chasm between the foulness of his life and the serenity of his intellect." The sweetness and freshness of his blank verse, the way in which he could colour a story and give it an atmosphere, give him claim to rank as one of the greatest of Shakspere's predecessors; and as a writer of lyrics he bears comparison with Marlowe as one of the freshest, most harmonious, and least artificial. His verse corresponds to the triumph of Doron as he glorifies Samela—

"Like to Diana in her summer weed,
Girt with a crimson robe of brightest dye,
Goes fair Samela.
Whiter than be the flocks that straggling feed
When washed by Arethusa faint they lie,
Is fair Samela.
As fair Aurora in her morning grey,
Decked with the ruddy glister of her love,
Is fair Samela.
Like lovely Thetis on a calm day,
When as her brightness Neptune's fancy move,
Is fair Samela."

It lends itself to the pleading tone of Fawnia's lover—

"Ah, were she pitiful as she is fair,
Or but as mild as she is seeming so,
Then were my hopes greater than my despair;
Then all the world were heaven, nothing woe.
Ah, were her heart relenting as her hand,
That seems to melt even with the mildest touch,
Then knew I where to seat me in a land
Under wide heavens, but yet (I know) not such."

Marlowe's lyrical power is abundantly proved by the well-known pastoral song:

"Come, live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods or steepy mountains yield."

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Shakspere's "Silvia" in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*—

> "Who is Silvia! what is she
> That all our swains commend her?
> Holy, fair, and wise is she;
> The heaven such grace did lend her
> That she might admired be;"

the sea-dirge in the *Tempest*—

> "Full fathom five thy father lies;
> Of his bones are coral made;"

—are but two instances among many of his power of writing songs and lyrics.

It was, however, the writers belonging to the declining drama that were above all fertile in lyrics. In proportion as dramatic power declined, and the real idea of the drama ceased to exercise influence, the lyrical power—the power of giving forcible expression to transitory moods and feelings—seemed to grow. Perhaps this was natural in that time of exaggerated feeling which came at the end of the Elizabethan period, when the emotional nature was kept in no check by an attempt to express it in conventional form,—when all that nobler stimulus to self-control, which came from attachment to great and high interests, had vanished, —when the excitable and passionate Elizabethan natures gave themselves up unrestrainedly to the feeling of the moment.

Among the most charming and most musical lyrics that were ever written are those of Fletcher. *The Faithful Shepherdess* is simply made up of them: and in many of his other plays—plays which are often sordid in plot and in characterisation—there are scattered songs charming in their freshness and grace. For instance, the song in the *Woman-Hater*—[1]

> "Come, sleep, and with thy sweet deceiving
> Lock me in delights awhile,
> Let some pleasing dreams beguile
> All my fancies: that from thence
> I may feel an influence,
> All my powers of care bereaving.
>
> "Tho' but a shadow, but a sliding
> Let me know some little joy,
> We that suffer long annoy
> Are contented with a thought:
> O let my joys have some abiding;"

[1] This play may have been written in conjunction with Beaumont.

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and the spirited song from *Valentiman*—

"Hear, ye ladies that despise,
What the mighty Love has done;
Fear examples and be wise:
Fair Calista was a nun;
Leda sailing on the stream
To deceive the hopes of man,
Love accounting but a dream
Doated on a silver swan;
Danaë, in a brazen tower,
Where no love was, loved a shower.

"Hear, ye ladies that are coy
What the mighty Love can do,
Fear the fierceness of the boy:
The chaste moon he made to woo;
Vesta, kindling holy fires
Circled round about with spies
Never dreaming loose desires
Doting at the altar dies;
Ilion, in a short hour, higher
He can build, and once more fire."

This period of brilliant art also favoured and developed the sonnet. Daniel and Drummond and Shakspere took away from this form of poetry the artificiality of feeling in which it had been born and nourished. It became no longer the expression of conventional emotion: Shakspere's first sonnets are the expression of devoted and deep friendship, and his last sonnets are dedicated to a pale, dark-eyed woman, who was the reverse of beautiful, according to the conventional ideas of beauty,—one whom it would have been impossible to address after the ordinary manner of sonnet-writers. Most of Drummond's sonnets were written to the memory of the woman he loved—Mary Cunningham, who died on the eve of their wedding. Others of his, like Shakspere's, are the expressions of true friendship, dedicated by him to Sir William Alexander. Daniel's sonnets to Delia stand midway between the conventional sonnet dictated by conventional emotion and the sonnets which were the expression of true feeling. The inspiration given by Delia, although she may have been only a half-real person, was sound. Daniel had, like Sidney, "looked in his heart and written"—

"Care-charmer sleep, son of the sable night,
Brother to death, in silent darkness born:
Relieve my languish and restore the light;
With dark forgetting of my care; return
And let the day be time enough to mourn

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The ship-wreck of my ill-adventur'd youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease dreams, the images of day-desires
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow,
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain
And never wake to feel the day's disdain."

Drummond's sonnets are all tinged with that melancholy which clouded his life long after the death of Mary Cunningham—

"Thou window, once which served for a sphere
To that dear planet of my heart, whose light
Made often blush the glorious queen of night
While she in thee more beauteous did appear,
What mourning weeds, alas! now dost thou wear?
How loathsome to mine eyes is thy sad sight?
How poorly look'st thou, with what heavy cheer
Since that sun set, which made thee shine so bright?
Unhappy now thee close, for as of late
To wond'ring eyes thou wast a paradise,
Bereft of her who made thee fortunate,
A gulf thou art, whence clouds of sighs arise;
But unto none so noisome as to me,
Who hourly see my murder'd joys in thee."

Shakspere's sonnets, which, like most Elizabethan sonnets, disregard strict form, are interesting not only because among them are some of the best of Elizabethan sonnets, though all of them by no means do credit to their great author; but also because they are the one autobiographical record that we have of the great dramatist. We gather from them that Shakspere was devoted to a friend who was for many years everything to him. This theory has not been destroyed by that ingenious German commentator who, endeavouring to solve the mystery of Mr. W. H., to whom the sonnets are written, and whose personality has never been clearly identified, suggested that Shakspere had written them to himself—that Mr. W. H. meant Mr. William Himself. "The sweet, witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakspere," says Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia*, when he mentions "these sugared sonnets that Shakspere wrote to his private friends." The first 126 of these sonnets are addressed to "Will," and the difficulty is to discover who this "Will" is,—"the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets, Mr. W. H." Some suppose that it is Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton; others that it is William Herbert, Earl of Pem-

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broke; but of the identity of either of these two persons with Mr. W. H. there can be no certainty. This first division of the sonnets can be divided into various groups—the first group extending from I. to XXXII. The sonnets in this group are addressed to this unknown friend, who is beautiful and brilliant, and express deep devoted friendship which nothing has as yet troubled—

XVII.

"If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, 'This poet lies.'"

XVIII.

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate."

In Sonnet XIX. he asks Time to be kind to the face of his friend—

"And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world and all her fading sweets,
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:
O, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen."

To think only of his friend is satisfaction enough—

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
. . . . . .
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored, all sorrows end."

Sonnets XXXIII. to XLII. express Shakspere's admiration for his friend—an admiration still deep, but now troubled by absence, and later by a fault he has committed:

XXXIX.

"O Absence, what a torment wouldst thou prove,
Were it not that sour leisure gave sweet leave
To entertain the time with thoughts of love."

He forgives him for what he has done—

XXXV.

"No more be grieved at that which thou hast done;
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun."
. . . . . .

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XL.

"And yet love knows it is a greater grief
To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury."

Sonnets XLII.-LXXIV. are to the same friend during a second absence—

L.

"My grief lies onward and my joy behind."

They express repeatedly the fear of Time—

LXIV.

"When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age;
When sometimes lofty towers I see down-razed,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
. . . . . .
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,—
That time will come and take my life away."

LX.

"Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end."

But Time shall not destroy the best of human feelings—

CIV.

"To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were, when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still."

CXXIII.

"No, Time thou shalt not boast that I do change."

CXVI.

"Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his binding sickle's compass come,
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom."

Perhaps the two most beautiful sonnets of the whole series, certainly the most beautiful as far as thought goes, are at the end of this group—Sonnets LXI. and LXVI.—

LXI.

"Is it thy will, thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?

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Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
So far from home, into my deeds to pry;
To find out shames and idle hours in me,
The scope and tenor of thy jealousy?
O no! thy love, though much, is not so great:
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake;
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
To play the watchman ever for thy sake:
For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
From me far off, with others all too near."

LXVI.

"Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone."

Sonnets from LXV. to XCVI. are troubled with thoughts of a rival in the friendship of W. H.: some suppose him to be Marlowe, from Sonnet LXXXVI.—

"Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
. . . . . .
I was not sick of any fear from thence:
But when your countenance fill'd up his line,
Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine."

In Sonnet LXXXVII. he seems to renounce him altogether—

"Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing;"

but again, from Sonnets XCVII. to XCIX., he shows himself to have returned to his allegiance: he grieves over his third separation from him—

XCVII.

"How like a winter hath my absence been,
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere!"

Sonnets C. to CXXVI. are written after a long pause, but express undiminished friendship—

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C.

"Where art thou, muse, that thou forget'st so long
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?"

Sonnets from CXXVI. to CXLVIII. are addresses to the pale dark-eyed lady who was so much the reverse of beautiful that some have supposed that Shakspere in writing them meant to parody the ordinary sonnet of his day. But although he does not seem to have thought her even beautiful or good, there is a genuine feeling animating the sonnets which sufficiently proves that they had a real object—

CXXX.

"My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
. . . . . .
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare."

CXLVIII.

"O cunning Love! with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes, well-seeing, thy foul faults should find."

Shakspere's sonnets, though by no means characterised by that rare power shown in his dramatic work, yet make an epoch in sonnet-writing. He was the first to make the sonnet the expression of deep sincere feeling, first for a friend, and then for the lady who had captivated him by no conventional charms, but by a power which called forth feelings perhaps not of the best kind, but certainly of a strong kind. And also these sonnets are full of a really spontaneous and unconventional spirit of devotion, which suffices for itself, and is happy without return—

"For I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe."

It characterises the best of his sonnets, gives us a little insight into the great and magnanimous soul of the dramatist, whose personality is so hidden behind his creations.

This period of the Elizabethan age, when men were not only alive to their own personal needs, and interested merely in their personal lives, but also in their great national life, is distinguished by the first effective development of patriotic and historic literature. The historical plays of Shakspere, of Chapman, and later of Ford, show the direction of the stimulus which had been

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given to drama by the sense of a great national destiny, and of a glorious national present and future. Laurence Minot had celebrated in his patriotic but archaic verse the battles of Edward III. Quite as stimulating to national enthusiasm were the great wars in which England was engaged at this time,—wars which were really undertaken for the independence and free national life of England against a king of Spain who was not only the champion of despotism, but the ally of the Papacy. Peele, when he wrote his verses of farewell to Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake, two of England's naval heroes at this time, was animated by a real and stirring spirit of patriotism, and the crisis at which he wrote rather excuses the somewhat excited language in which he speaks of the "matchless English virtue."

"Have done with care, my hearts! abroad amain,
With stretching sails to plough the swelling waves,
Bid England's shore and Albion's chalky cliffs
Farewell! bid stately Troynovant adieu,
Where pleasant Thames from Isis silver head
Begins her quiet glide, and runs along
To that brave bridge, the bar that thwarts her course,
Near neighbour to the ancient stony tower,
The glorious hold that Julius Cæsar built.
. . . . . .
Change love for arms; girt to your blades, my boys!
Your rests and muskets take; take helm and targe,
And let god Mars his consort make you mirth.
. . . . . .
You follow Drake, by sea the scourge of Spain,
The dreadful dragon, terror to your foes,
Victorious in his return from Ind,
In all his high attempts unvanquished.
You follow noble Norris, whose renown,
Won in the fertile fields of Belgia,
Spreads by the gates of Europe to the courts
Of Christian kings and heathen potentates.
You fight for Christ and England's peerless queen,
Elizabeth, the wonder of the world,
Over whose throne the enemies of God
Have thundered erst their vain successless braves."

The poetry of Warner shows that pride in the past of the English which patriotism and a belief in its Future had stimulated, but it shows little more. He composed a tedious poem called *Albion's England*, a history of England from the Deluge to the time of Elizabeth; "but," says Mr. Saintsbury, "in spite of the singularity of its plan, and the vigorous touches

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scattered here and there, it will not allow him to be compared to even the second rate Elizabethans,—certainly not with his fellow historians, Drayton and Daniel." Drayton, without doubt the greatest of the historic poets of the age, is known by the *Civil Wars of Edward II. and Barons; England's Heroical Epistles;* and the *Polyolbion*, a descriptive poem of Britain in 30,000 lines, mixed with stories and antiquarian facts, all digested into a so-called poem. But the patriotic spirit, apart from patriotic motive, is best seen in his ballad on *The Battle of Agincourt*:—

"Fair stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance,
Nor now to prove our chance
Longer will tarry;
But putting to the main,
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train
Landed King Harry.

. . . .

"And turning to his men,
Quoth our brave Henry then,
'Though they to one be ten
Be not amazed;
Yet have we well begun,
Battles so bravely won
Have ever to the sun
By fame been raised.

'And for myself (quoth he),
This my full rest shall be,
England ne'er mourn for me,
Nor more esteem me.
Victor I will remain,
Or on this earth lie slain;
Never shall she sustain
Loss to redeem me.'

. . . .

"They now to fight are gone,
Armour on armour shone,
Drum now to drum did groan,
To hear was wonder;
That with the cries they make
The very earth did shake,
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
Thunder to thunder.

"Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which didst the signal aim
To our hid forces;

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When from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly,
The English archery
Stuck the French horses.

"Warwick in blood did wade,
Oxford the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made,
Still as they ran up;
Suffolk his axe did ply,
Beaumont and Willoughby
Bare them right doughtily,
Ferrers and Fanhope.

"Upon St. Crispin's day
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay
To England to carry.
O when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen,
Or England breed again
Such a King Henry?"

Daniel, who is known also by his charming and carefully-constructed sonnets to Delia, claims a rank among the patriotic and historic poets of his time by his poem on the *Civil Wars*. "But," says Mr. Saintsbury, "there can be no doubt, however, that his choice of historical subjects for his poetry was unfortunate for his fame. His one qualification for the task was his power of dignified moral reflection, in which he has hardly a superior." Probably Chapman, in his historical drama, especially in *Bussy d'Ambois*, and the *Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, may lay claim to being his equal in weight and fulness of moral reflection. But this power, it is well known, does not make a poet; indeed, too greatly developed, it tends rather to unmake one. Daniel has not Chapman's gift of fine dignified verse; he has not attempted to seize the spirit of the historic period with which he busies himself; he lacks the faculty of narrative: the result is, as Mr. Saintsbury says, "that *The History of the Civil Wars* is with difficulty readable."

The third great phase of this period is represented by philosophical poetry, which marks the maturer and more reflective aspect of the Elizabethan mind,—poetry which is animated by a certain gloomy and sometimes by a morbid spirit, which finds no satisfaction in life for its faculties, and so exercises them in philosophy. This literature is sad; it marks a depressing epoch; it is indeed worth notice, as Mr. Stopford Brooke says, as an

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indication of that thinking spirit which was to produce Hobbes, Harrington, and Locke; but it marks the end of the glowing enthusiasm that coloured all things in earlier times and infused them with life. The ideal glamour which the art of former poets had thrown over life is to these poets but an illusion. Certainly the ideal of the pastoral was always reckoned an illusion, although it was a very favourite one. No one ever attempted to deny that it was an artificial form of art; but it was a suitable playground for some imaginations; and when we find Raleigh in his reply to Marlowe's pastoral song exposing all its pretty delusions, taking away all the natural though shallow charm that some of the verses dictated by its spirit certainly had, we feel that the old age of the Elizabethan period has indeed come, in all its sternness and grimness, even without any tender memory of its youthful feelings.

"If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

"But time drives flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

"The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields:
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrows fall.

"Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten—
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

"Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs—
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

"But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need;
Then those delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love."

Sir Walter Raleigh had little time for writing, so engrossed was he in all the political and military schemes and court intrigues of the day. But all that he did write is tinged with philosophic reflectiveness, and sometimes a gloomy sententious-

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ness. There is none of the young Elizabethan joyousness about him; rather the severe religious spirit of the mediæval mystic—

"Of death and judgment, heaven and hell,
Who oft doth think, must needs die well."

Himself one of the most outwardly chivalrous of Elizabethans, he is yet guilty of verse which, in its tendency towards moralising of the most commonplace kind, would take the life out of any system of chivalry.

"For those desires that aim too high
For any mortal lover,
When reason cannot make them die,
Discretion doth them lower."

If this had been characteristic of the tone and expression of all Raleigh's works, he could not claim a place even among the lesser philosophic artists of his time. But he has written poems which show that he had real and profound moral sensibilities, jarred by the worldliness and sordidness of the life into which he had plunged, and which he found so difficult; as, for example, the small poem called "The Lie"—

"So, soul, the body's guest
Upon a thankless arrant[1]:
Fear not to touch the best,
The truth shall be thy warrant:
Go, since I needs must die
And give the world the lie.

. . . .

"Tell zeal it wants devotion:
Tell love it is but lust,
Tell time it is but motion,
Tell flesh it is but dust:
And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.

"Tell age it daily wasteth:
Tell honor how it alters,
Tell beauty how she blasteth,
Tell favour how it falters:
And as they shall reply,
Give every one the lie."

Very early in the period were written lyrics and songs expressing that weariness of things which seeks consolation in a sort of sententious philosophy, and believes the greatest happiness to consist in a state of cultivated content—a condition which, in

[1] Errand.

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both senses of the term, leaves nothing to hope for. Greene wrote the song beginning—

"Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content,"

ending—

"A mind content both crown and kingdom is."

Dyer, the friend of Sidney and Greville, is remembered chiefly by one poem, attributed to him—

"My mind to me a kingdom is:
Such present joys therein I find,
That it excels all other bliss
That earth affords or grows by kind:
Though much I want which most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave."

Sir Henry Wotton writes of the character of a happy life, of the bliss of the man

"Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of public fame or private breath."

But the most profoundly reflective poems of the day,—poems which are animated by the real philosophic and enquiring spirit, and not stimulated by mere personal dissatisfaction,—are those of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, and Sir John Davies.

Lord Brooke throws light on his purposes in writing. "For my own part I found my creeping genius more fixed upon the images of life than the images of wit, and therefore chose not to write to them on whose foot the black ox had not already trod, as the proverb is, but to those only that are weather-beaten in the sea of this world, such as, having lost the sight of their gardens and groves, study to sail on a right course among rocks and quicksand."

In the tragedy of *Mustapha* he says—

"Man should make much of life as Nature's table
Wherein she writes the cypher of her glory.
Forsake not nature, nor misunderstand her:
Her mysteries are read without Faith's eyesight:
She speaketh in our flesh: and from our senses
Delivers down her wisdoms to our reason.
If any man would break her laws to kill,
Nature doth for defence allow offences."

Lord Brooke, says Mr. Ward, has great thinking power, but

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his powers of expression were not equal to the strength of his mental capacity. "Words are taxed beyond what they can bear: all thoughts, whether great or trivial, are tortured into the same over-laboured dress: there is no ease, no flow, no joy." Yet at times his verse is impressive from the very nobility of the thoughts it conveys; as, for instance, the lines in his treatise on "Human Learning"—

> "The chief use then in man of that he knows
> Is his painstaking for the good of all;
> Not fleshly weeping for our own-made woes,
> Not laughing from a melancholy gall,
> Not hating from a soul that overflows
> With bitterness, breathed out from inward thrall,
> But sweetly rather to ease, to loose or bind,
> As need requires, this frail fall'n humankind."

But it needs not to be pointed out that the philosophic poets are inferior to the other poets of their great generation, both in their temperaments, which were the reverse of artistic, and also because their natures led them to think that every subject, under every aspect, was material for the poet. Sir John Davies, like Lord Brooke, wrote on "Human Knowledge," and "On the Soul of Man and the Immortality thereof," these two "elegies" constituting his great work *Nosce Teipsum*. Inferior to Lord Brooke in the qualities that go to make the true philosopher, he was superior in artistic skill,—in the selection, arrangement, and management of his thought. In easier and smoother verse he dwells on "that divine discontent," beyond which, however, he and many of his school never seemed to go. He speaks of the soul—how

> "Under heaven she cannot light on aught
> That with her heavenly nature doth agree;
> She cannot rest, she cannot fix her thought,
> She cannot in this world contented be."
> . . . . . .

How that we go through the world and never possess our souls—

> "We that acquaint ourselves with every zone,
> And pass both tropics and behold the poles,
> When we come home are to ourselves unknown,
> And unacquainted still with our own souls."

As far as poetry is concerned the philosophic school only deserves notice as marking the decline of the art of the great Elizabethan period. It is indeed a great and noble decline, but it is certainly

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the decline of that great age which was so full of exuberance and energy, so interested in the mere exercise of its own faculties, so open to interest in all aspects and sides of life, so contented in the healthiness of its being. When we see men like Sir John Davies and Lord Brooke, especially men like Lord Brooke, full of earnest thought and feeling, dwelling mostly on the unsatisfactoriness of life, the want of gratification that it affords to the highest and noblest cravings of human nature,—we feel that the brilliant period of art is indeed passing away, that outward circumstances have ceased to stimulate and encourage a life which is happy and energetic because it is in harmony with its surroundings. It was evident that life, both national and intellectual, was beginning to offer hard problems to solve. The life of the best and thinking people became more and more reflective, and in proportion art and poetry declined, and prose, the vehicle of reasoned conclusions, improved.

But before this epoch arrived English art had culminated in the drama, and Shakspere, Marlowe, and Ben Jonson, and even Beaumont and Fletcher in their way, proved how great could be English dramatic genius.

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CHAPTER VI.

RISE OF THE DRAMA.[1]

King John (1548 *circ.*) By Bishop BALE.
Gorboduc. 1562. First three acts by Thomas NORTON; the last two by Thomas SACKVILLE, Lord Buckhurst.
Ralph Roister Doister. 1551 or earlier. By UDALL.
Gammer Gurton's Needle. Probably 1575. Probably by ~~STILL~~ S TOU LSON

IN the Elizabethan age was the highest development of the English national drama, because only by that age were united the two essential requisites for great dramatic art. The Elizabethans enjoyed a wide and closely national life, and the drama is an art which, like architecture, requires the co-operation of a large and united nation. More than any other art, it depends for success and encouragement on public opinion; it must mirror the tastes and instincts of the national mind, and in return its image must be recognised and appreciated. And secondly, Elizabethan national life furnished all the material that the drama required,—great crises, great events, great personages, strange and exciting vicissitudes of fortune. The brilliant and exciting foreign policy of Henry VIII., the Reformation under himself and his successors, the position it gave England in Europe, thrilling in its insecurity and importance,—all this gave to the nation excitement, while it made it feel its unity. It was kept at a high strain throughout the whole of the sixteenth century; yet at the latter end of this century, the period when the drama flourished most brilliantly, there came a time of comparative quiet, which gave the necessary leisure and opportunity for production. Then this brilliant and interesting national life found expression in dramatic art, which never before, and never since, in England has had such a vigorous life, and such high ideals.

[1] The substance of this chapter is almost entirely taken from Mr. Ward's *Dramatic Literature.*

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And yet, like every other form of life, physical or literary, the drama has had a gradual development: there is a history of its growth, and without tracing this history it is impossible to understand the nature and the importance of the sudden burst of Elizabethan dramatic art. It was not alone the outburst of the vigorous mental life which we call the Renaissance,—it was not alone the influence of classic models introduced through Italy which produced it: it had its origin before; its *raison d'être* lay deep down in the national life; it was the satisfaction of needs such as are naturally felt by every people united by common interest. But before the Renaissance the drama was small and slight; it gave small promise of that magnificent development which culminated in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Early dramas consisted merely in plot: they could claim to be dramas only because they represented by way of imitation the unity of an action. But the ideal and complete drama has three requisites: it requires not only plot; but secondly, externals—such as literary externals, which consist in diction and versification, and stage externals—the dramatic *mise-en-scène*, the elements of music, scenic decoration, etc.; and lastly, as its most artistic and valuable element, the interest given by characterisation. By the power of characterisation is meant, not only the power of conceiving a character, of making it real and human, and of preserving its unity throughout the whole play, but also the power of developing it with reference to the internal struggle of motive and of will,—the power of showing how the struggle acts on, and is acted on, by the influences of the external world. This interest was not given in full to the drama till Shakspere wrote. Of this power he was the master; and in him the drama reached its greatest and highest development, for he possessed not only this supreme power of dramatic art, but he united with it the two other necessary dramatic elements,—power of constructing or working out a plot, and the power of producing an effective *mise-en-scène*. Never, either before or after him, have these three essentials been united in so perfect a manner: we have had attractive dramatic *mise-en-scène;* we have had everything that could attract the eye, and by that help to tell its own story; we have had ably conceived characters, speaking in polished verse or prose,—the drama of Dryden and of Addison; we have had well-constructed plots in the drama of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Chapman, and of Webster,—but never, except by the genius of Shakspere, have these three essentials been adequately united.

Of these three requisites plot was the first and most essential

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—indeed, the element without which it is impossible for a drama to exist. Naturally and necessarily the beginnings of the drama in all countries were religious, because only religion could make the inward unity of an action realisable. This it did by its conception of a supreme being who watched over the whole of the action—over its preparation, rise, culmination, decline, and fall, administering the sanction, the reward, or the punishment. "In France the remains of the Greco-Roman secular drama,—one of the literary links that united the new and the old world, which had itself been religious in origin,—lingered on in the performances of the *jongleurs* and *joculatores*, who repeated chivalrous poems of love and war, with imitation of the action." Through them the spirit of the secular drama struggled with the religious drama. In England, although we have *jongleurs* after the Norman conquest, they were but a temporary foreign growth, and disappeared soon, giving place entirely to the religious drama. "Even in the religious services of the Catholic Church, especially in that highest and most solemn form of service, the mass, is the suggestion of the dramatic motive afterwards developed through successive stages into the morality, then into the regular drama." Hagenbach, in his *Kirchengeschichte*, says :—"In the wide dimensions which in course of time the mass assumed there lies a grand —we are almost inclined to say an artistic—idea. A dramatic progression is perceptible in all the symbolic processes, from the appearance of the celebrant priest at the altar and the confession of sins to the Kyrie Eleison, and from this to the grand doxology, after which the priest turns with the Dominus Vobiscum to the congregation, and calls upon it to pray. . . . In the mass we have thus a dramatic action, in part pantomimically presented, in part aided by both epical and lyrical elements. It has a beginning, which is at the same time an explanation of its cause, a central action (immolation, consecration), and a close. From the mystery of the liturgy to the liturgical drama, nothing is needed but the dramatic intention." The history of our drama is found in the development of this dramatic idea through the successive stages of the mystery plays, whose plots are composed of the events of the Gospel, of miracle plays, dealing with the lives of saints, and lastly, of moralities dealing with the action of personified vices and virtues. From the morality, with the stimulus of the Renaissance, the passage to the regular drama was easy and quick. But before these developments could be entered upon, two things were necessary : "the popularity of the plays must be secured, in order that through them instruction in

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divine things could be given; and they could only be made thoroughly popular by being written not in Latin, but in the vernacular." This important step was made gradually, early in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Secondly, it was important that the drama should emancipate itself from the control of the Church, which, although one of the educating influences of the Middle Ages, was also at the same time one of the most obstructive. The first step in this direction was made by Innocent III., in 1210, who ordered that the representation of mysteries and miracle-plays might take place outside the Church as well as inside it. "This gave liberty to lay associations, to guilds and schools, to act plays in honour of their saintly patrons, either in their own halls or in their vicinity. Soon we find creeping in elements which the drama could never have fostered had it remained as an instrument of instruction in the hands of the Church; scenes and characters of a more or less trivial description are allowed to mix with the religious motives;" the comic element begins with Herod, who is generally dressed as a Saracen, and with the devils, to whom it was thought necessary to give a hideous and fiendish appearance, in order to excite instantaneous antipathy.

In the mystery and miracle plays, the great point being the plot, which was to be a careful representation of some scriptural or holy action, little attention was paid to literary externals. In the infancy of the art it could not be expected that any interest in character should be attempted. Occasionally, however, we come across quaint pathetic lines like those of the Virgin (in the Betraying of Christ), which seem to show that the writer realised his character:—

"Ah! Jesu! Jesu! Jesu! Jesu!
Why should ye suffer this tribulation and adversitie?
How may they find in their hearts you to pursue,
That never trespassed in no manner degree?
For never thing but that was good thought ye,
Wherefore then should ye suffer this great pain?
I suppose verily it is for the trespass of me,
And I wist that my heart should cleve in twain."

As for stage externals they were of the rudest description. "The manner of these plays were,—every company had his pageant, which pageants were a high scaffold with two rooms, a higher and a lower, upon four wheels. In the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher room they played, being all open on the top, that all beholders might hear and see them. The places

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where they played them was in every street. They began first at the Abbey gates, and when the first pageant was played it was wheeled to the high cross before the Mayor, and so to every street."

This is the account given by Rogers of the plays held at Whitsuntide in Chester. The performances were never strictly confined to the stage: horsemen frequently rode up to the scaffold and took part in the action; and in a pageant acted at Coventry there is a stage-direction which allows Herod "to rage in the pagond and in the street also." In France the stage was divided into three platforms, with a dark cavern at the side of the lowest, appropriated respectively to the Heavenly Father and his angels, to saints and glorified men; the second to men as men; and the third to souls in hell. Hell-mouth was an English institution; fire was occasionally displayed within. There is accorded at the occasion of the Draper's Pageant at Coventry the expense for the keeping up of the fire at hell-mouth. At a later period simple natural phenomena, which required no elaborate mechanism, such as earthquakes, were introduced. Disembodied souls, which hovered about the stage, were distinguished by wearing black or white coats according to their kind, and divine and saintly personages were distinguished by gilt hair and beards.

As far as we can tell, on the evidence of stage-directions, the rudeness of stage-externals continued till a very late time in the history of the drama. As late as 1563 the directions in the play of *Virginius* mention the scaffold, as if the stage was still the movable institution on wheels, used originally for the mysteries and miracle-plays. Economy in actors, not their suitability to represent certain personages, was the point most studied. In Bale's *King John* (1548) there is a stage-direction —"Go out England and dress for clergy." In *Cambises*, written probably about 1561, a tragedy crowded with characters, it is so arranged that they can all be done by seven men and one boy. Even after the founding of theatres,—after Blackfriar's Theatre and two others had been set up in the fields near Shoreditch in 1576,—there seems to have been little ingenuity exercised in the construction or working of stage machinery. A stage-direction in one of Greene's plays is characteristic both of the rudeness of the scene mechanism and also of the indifference with which it was regarded: "Exit Venus, or, if you can conveniently, let a chain down from the top of the stage and draw her up." Mr. Stopford Brooke gives the following description of the Globe Theatre, built in 1599:—"In the form of a hexagon outside, it

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was circular within and open to the weather, except above the stage. The play began at 3 o'clock; the nobles and ladies sat on boxes or on stools on the stage; the people stood in the pit or yard. The stage itself, strewn with rushes, was a naked room, with a blanket for a curtain; wooden imitations of animals, towers, woods, etc., were all the scenery used; and a board stating the place of action was hung out from the top when the scene changed." There was much room on the part of the audience for that "fervid imagination" which, as Mr. Taine says, readily supplied all they lacked. The Elizabethan imagination required for its illusions no preparations or perspectives—few or no movable scenes. A scroll in big letters announced to the public that they were in London or Constantinople—that was enough: there was no trouble about probability. What Sir Philip Sidney says in illustration of the neglect by contemporary dramatists of the three classic unities serves also to show the scantiness of stage-externals:—"You shall have Asia of the one side and Affrick of the other,—so many other under-kingdoms, that the Player when he comes in must ever begin by telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now shall you have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by we hear newes of shipwreck in the same place, then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock; . . . while in the mean time two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field."

M. Taine records that the greatest pleasure he ever experienced from the drama was given him by a strolling company "of four young girls playing comedy and tragedy on a stage in a coffee-house." M. Taine was then eleven years old; and he thinks that the illusions of a fresh imaginative young nature, eager for joy and ready to find it anywhere, sufficiently supplemented what talent the actors might possess. So it must have been with a Elizabethan audience: their souls were fresh—"as ready to feel everything as the artist to dare everything." They felt no want of the three unities, no deficiencies in the scenery and the costumes; they idealised the young and probably awkward boys to whom convention assigned the women's parts. The development, then, of stage-externals came late in the history of the drama.

Yet it is somewhat astonishing that the cultivation of masques and pageants, which went on assiduously side by side with the drama,—these shows, according to Ascham, forming the staple

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literary entertainment of the English Court,—should not, by training the eye and the external sense of the audience, have made them more exacting with reference to the *mise-en-scène* of the drama proper. Especially when we find great minds like those of Ben Jonson and Bacon devoting themselves to the production and consideration of such entertainments, we are astonished to find that they did not influence the dramatic stage to a greater extent.

But Bacon, although he, with two other gentlemen, prepared a show which was to supplement the performance of the *Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587), — although he takes a scientific interest in noting down "those things which do *naturally* take the sense," and does not "respect petty wonderments,"—yet he is anxious to show that he considers the whole matter of trifling importance. His essay on "Masques and Triumphs" begins—"These things are but toys to come amongst such serious observations," and concludes with the impatient observation—"Enough of such toys."

Perhaps it would not be too much to say that in proportion as real dramatic talent decreased,—in proportion as plays offered less satisfaction to the imagination and intellect, — attention became more concentrated on the *mise-en-scène*—on those dramatic qualities which move the sense alone. Who can find fault now with the stage-externals of our best theatres? But who can feel satisfied with the quality of what is acted and with its manner of representation?

Even the Renaissance, then, with its longings for splendour and magnificence,—for all that can delight the eye,—did not develop the drama much in this respect. What the Renaissance did was to give the finishing touch to the development, already begun, of the morality into the human and secular drama.

The essential characteristic of the morality, which in the second quarter of the fifteenth century was a recognised form of stage entertainment, is literary allegory, which, always satisfactory to the Teutonic mind, had received a lasting impulse from the French models, which were influential after the Norman conquest. "It was no difficult transition," says Mr. Ward, "from the devil of the mysteries and miracle-plays to the vice of the moralities; and once the idea of personified qualities realised, all the material for allegory was complete. . . . But moralities never domesticated themselves among the English till they had come to connect themselves with the political and religious questions of the day." The popularity of *Piers Plowman*, dreaming on the Malvern Hills, shows what interest could be attached to long and com-

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plicated allegory, full of religious and ecclesiastical significance. "But unfortunately, during the time of the Reformation, when various questions were at issue, which would have given admirable material to the morality-stage, the fitful and capricious despotism of Henry VIII. with regard to these questions made it dangerous for it to stand forward openly as the exponent of public opinion." Nevertheless, although its development was stunted, and it was superseded by the more advanced species of drama, we have a few examples of the fully-developed morality; as, for instance, in Skelton's *Magnificence* (written after 1515), of which the object is to offer

> "A playne example of worldly vainglory,
> How in this world there is no sekernesse,
> But fallible flattery enmixed with bitterness."

"It is written," says Mr. Ward, "in the true spirit of the Reformation, hatred of ecclesiastical dominion,—its literary tone being a return to that natural sense and vivacity which characterised Chaucer." John Skelton is indeed the one genuine poet that England in the early years of the sixteenth century can claim. A poet who made it the glory of his verse that although it was "ragged and jagged," it had "in it some pith," was likely to find suitable material for his genius in the morality. Magnificence is seduced by the company of false friends, Counterfeit Countenance, Crafty Conveyance, into a wild unrestrained life, which ultimately must lead to ruin. He associates with Adversity and Poverty, Despair and Mischief; but before the depths of wickedness are reached he is recovered by Good Hope, who, with the aid of Redress, Circumspection, and Perseverance, brings him to recognise the error of his ways.

There are also other moralities analogous to this in the broad general moral lesson they would convey, exhibiting the pernicious results of riotous living. Some of them are concerned with the vital religious question of the day, and express hatred to Rome and her corrupt clergy, such as *Newe Custom* (p. 1573), a purely controversial production; its characters, which can be undertaken by four players, representing the Church of Rome and its supporters against the Reformation and its supporters. *Perverse Doctrine* goes further in its expression of hatred to Rome. It personifies not only Perverse Doctrine but Ignorance as Popish priests, giving them for friends Hypocrisy, Cruelty, and Avarice. Perverse Doctrine, who regards the spread of the Bible as "casting pearls before swine," is opposed by New Custom and Light of

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the Gospel, with their friends Edification, Assurance, and God's Felicitie, who, quoting Paul to the Corinthians, declare the mass, purgatory, and pardons, to be flat against God's words; ultimately Light of the Gospel succeeds in converting Perverse Doctrine. A further step had been made in the history of the morality in *Albyon Knight* (prohibited in 1557 by order of the Privy Council), "a morality written with the object of removing the ill-feeling on the part of the commonality against the nobility, as well as the jealousy between the lords spiritual and the lords temporal, the hero of it being a personification of England—its moral, the evil results of discord."

Albyon Knight may be fairly said to be a morality, but there were other dramas written about this time hovering very doubtfully on the boundary line that separated moralities from the regular drama. "The essence of the morality being the allegory, we must consider that it loses the character of pure morality, when a personage who is not an embodiment, not a personification that belongs to the world of allegory, is introduced." *Tom Tiler and his Wife* (1578) has, then, more of the nature of a drama proper than of a morality. Though there are in the play allegorical abstractions, such as Desire the Vice, and though Tom Tiler's wife is herself half an abstraction, half a type, yet the presence of Tom Tiler himself raises it to the level of the drama, giving, as it does, the second place to the morality element. Tom Tiler headed a series of doubtful boundary productions, including *Appius and Virginia*, *King Cambises*, and even Bale's *King John*, in which the dramatic and morality element mix. Thus dramatic art, even before it came under Renaissance influence, had shown that the necessity of giving immediate *personal* interest was felt, "if these moral truths were to call forth any agreement beyond that of mere calm acquiescence. . . . Abstract qualities, personifications, were cold, with little capacity for calling forth vivid emotions of pity and terror. These emotions could only be excited in a high degree by abandoning the basis on which the moralities were constructed." What the Renaissance influence did was to supply material which suggested the conception of characters of real flesh and blood,—human types, calculated to interest their fellow-creatures. This it did through classic and Italian models.

And first came the influence of Italian models, for long before the Renaissance asserted itself in England, Italian tragedy had seized on subjects of national interest. Long before the company of Italian actors visited England and acted before the Queen in

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1578, the Italian stage had become national and historical. The *Capture of Cesena*, written in the fourteenth century, dealt with that event which happened in 1357. The Italians became proverbial for their aptitude in finding material. Kyd, in his Spanish tragedy, alludes to the Italian tragedians who were so sharp of wit,

> "That in one hour's meditation
> They would perform anything in action."

It was the Italians who first brought into England historical writing of a more attractive description. An Italian wrote an English history in Latin under Henry VII. and VIII. The "concordance of histories" was produced in Henry VII.'s reign; it was part of the work of the New Learning to promote the study of national history; "the Tudors and the authors in their employ, by means of historical literature, blackened their adversaries and glorified their friends; reformers recurred to the lessons of past reigns; it was seen that, with the help of the chronicles of past times, a practical lesson might be read to the living generation; and thus of all the forms of controversial morality, that of the historical morality seemed most to recommend itself by its impressiveness, its interest, and also, and this was no slight consideration,—one which had fettered the morality in its free later development,—by its comparative safety." The nature of this transition from the allegoric morality to the human drama is significant of the growth of art in a Puritan and Teutonic country. The lesson comes first, and then the art to render the lesson attractive. The drama is not concerned with "trifling sport, in fantaisie framed, nor such like gaudish gere," but with "things that shall your inward stomach cheer." Thus wrote Bale in the Prologue to *God's Promises* in 1538. Bale's play of *King John*, on which his title to fame mostly rests, was circulated in 1548, and "breathes the very spirit that animated the country in the early years of Edward VI." It is a suitable illustration of this transition; "it is an emphatic defiance of Pope and Popery, in a tone which would please men like Somerset and the Calvinistic Reformers, who made war on the relics of the Roman ritual and church wealth spared by Henry VIII.; but its moral is enforced not through the mouth of embodied vices and virtues, not pointed through their action, but through the mouth and action of a well-known national personage, King John." The play begins with a speech from him, declaring his descent and position, and announcing his intention to do his duty by his people. Then

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England enters as a widow beseeching the King to protect her from her oppressors. Her language concerning them is plain and significant; they principally consist of

> "Such lubbers as have disguised heads in their hoods
> Which in idleness do live by other men's goods,
> Monks, canons and nuns in divers colors and shape,
> Both white black and pied; God send their increase ill happe."

Sedition, who conducts mainly the action of the play, is its solitary comic character, being the embodiment of the spirit of evil and mockery. He tells King John that the Pope is at the bottom of the evils under which the country is suffering. The understanding of the reader is suddenly troubled in the middle of the play by "the assumption of historic personality on the part of some of the allegoric characters." Sedition becomes Stephen Langton, Private Wealth the Cardinal Pandulphus, Usurped Power the Pope. Together they agree in issuing an interdict over England; under pressure the King gives up his crown, and, in defiance of all historic truth, he dies as a royal victim, uttering words which cast a pathos over his end—

> "Farewell, sweet England, now last of all to thee;
> I am right sorry I could do for thee no more.
> Farewell once again, yea, farewell for evermore."

At this point, when the morality, with the help of the feeling for history, showed a tendency to develop into the drama proper, through its offshoot the historical morality,—the morality proper still continuing to exist side by side with it till the end of Elizabeth's reign,—dramatic productions separate themselves into tragedy and comedy. As a rule, especially in the early times of the drama, when life did not represent itself as complex to the minds of dramatists, it was easy to include all dramatic productions in one of these two classes, comedies being so "in virtue of mirth," tragedies in virtue of "killing." We have indeed *Damon and Pythias* (prob. 1571), by Edwardes, which includes both elements, and was called by him a comedy, although the tragic element predominated. For this mixture there is a classic precedent in the *Alcestis* of Euripides; and plays of this kind were written by the Italians, who invented for them the term tragi-comedy. The same term is used by the dramatist Fletcher in rather a different sense. "Tragic-comedy," he says in his Dedication to *The Faithful Shepherdess*, "is not tragedy, in respect that it wants deaths, and not comedy, because it brings people very near to it.

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It is," he concludes, "a representation of familiar people, with such trouble as no life can be without." But the term[1] of which this is the definition was not much wanted by our early dramatists. As a rule, their productions dealt not with familiar people leading the ordinary chequered career of mortals, but with distinguished historic or purely imaginary people, who indulged in the extremes of "killing," or the extremes of mirth. There is no difficulty, therefore, in separating thus broadly into tragedy and comedy the plays which now begin to increase in number and variety.

To the direct influence of Seneca is ascribed the composition of the first English tragedy. Between 1559 and 1581 ten of Seneca's plays were translated, and *Gorboduc, or Porrex and Ferrex*, is based on Seneca's *Thebais*, though the subject is taken from British legend. It was written in 1562; the first three acts were said in the first edition to have been written by Thomas Norton, the last two by Sackville. Although the frequent change of scene shows a disregard of the three unities, probably due to the influence of Spanish models, yet classic influence still shows itself strongly in the chorus which closes each act, and in the fact that murders are not performed on the stage—the announcement of them being made by messengers. The first original work of magnitude of English literature written in blank verse, it is also important as suggesting the further advance of the dramatic art by the dumb show which precedes each act, setting forth the contents of the act which follows in order to prevent the spectator from being so absorbed in the interest of the incidents as to distract his attention from the language, the characters, the general manner of treatment.

Of superior construction to *Gorboduc* is another early tragedy, *Appius and Virginia* (circulated 1563), of which the author is unknown. The point of the plot is the destruction of the domestic bliss of Virginia and his wife and daughter by Appius. It is concise in idea, and the plot is well managed. It is neither so bloody nor so involved as Norton and Sackville's tragedy, in the argument of which we are told that the sons of Gorboduc falling into dissension, the younger kills the elder, the mother for revenge killing the younger; the people, "moved with the cruelty of the fact, rising and killing the father and mother: the nobility, rising in their turn and terribly destroying the rebels, ultimately falling to civil war, in which both they and many of their issues

[1] Our term "high-comedy" seems to correspond to Fletcher's definition.

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were terribly slain, and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted." If deaths, as Fletcher says, make a tragedy, here indeed was one. The literary merit of another "lamentable tragedy," containing the life, bad deeds, and death of Cambises, King of Persia (probably about 1561), has had lasting fame given to it by Shakspere, though probably not of the kind its author would have wished, by his mention of it in *Henry IV.*, Part I. Act ii. Scene 4.

Between 1560-80 a large variety of plays, showing classical influence by their choice of subject, were represented at court, some of them being mythological, some of them historical,—under the latter head are *Scipio Africanus*, and a play called *Ptoleme*, which Gosson excepts from his general censure; as well as "That Pig of his own Sow," called *Catilin's Conspiracy*. The *Jocasta* of Gascoigne, a free adaptation of the Euripides, was acted in 1566. *Damon and Pythias*, whose author is termed "the flower of our realm and phœnix of our age," cannot be said to mark any advance in dramatic art, it being one of the clumsiest of our early plays, especially in its language, making, as it does, an unsuccessful attempt to get rid of the monotony of rhyme by neglecting the *cæsura*.

The fetters of classic models in tragedy were first broken by some author unknown, who produced as a tragedy a dramatic version of the story of *Romeo and Juliet*. So we must believe on the authority of Arthur Brooke, who in 1562 printed a metrical paraphrase of Benedello's history of *Romeo and Juliet*, stating that he had seen "the same argument lately set forth on the stage." Then followed numerous plays taken from Italian story, among which one, *Tancred and Gismunda*,—first acted in 1568, the plot taken from Boccaccio's *Decameron*,—shows the struggle between the classical tastes of its author and his desire to do justice to the romantic character of the subject. In the first four acts the classical element predominates: there are choruses of maidens which help to explain the action, the most tragic incidents of which are at first kept behind the scene; but in the last act Gismunda drinks her death from the golden cup—in which her father has put the heart of her lover—on the stage, and on the stage too dies her broken-hearted father, who slays himself with his own hands. Not only stern moralists like Ascham, but even playwrights themselves, such as George Whetstone, distrusted Italian influence. Yet Whetstone took the plot of his *Promos and Cassandra* from an Italian story, so we may assume that it was only the Italian stage that he condemns in that dedication to

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this play. "At this day," he says, "the Italian is so lascivious in his comedies that honest hearers are grieved at his actions," contrasting him with the German, "who is too holy; for he presents on every common stage what preachers should pronounce in pulpit,"—a criticism which might reasonably have been applied a short time earlier to the English stage.

Finally, a return to the subjects of the chronicle histories indicated that the classical influence and Italian influence had done their work as educators, and that a stimulus to choose and treat truly national themes had begun. *The Misfortunes of Arthur* by T. Hughes, acted in 1587, though, as Mr. Ward says, "one of the most remarkable of our early tragedies," dealt with a personage who, though claiming to belong to the historic past of England, is too mythical to satisfy the national desire for history. More satisfactory was the famous *Victorie of Henry V.*, written and acted before 1588; but the best example of chronicle history play is *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (prob. 1591), "in which," says Mr. Ward, "the facts are duly given, but where the author shows himself fully alive to the political lessons of his subject." The tragedy of *Sir Thomas More* (circ. 1596) is striking, as showing how soon it was possible to put great public events into a dramatic form—even historical events connected with the recent dubious policy of Henry VIII. With great tact More's fall is treated as a heaven-sent calamity. "A very worthy gentleman seals error with his blood," says the character whose speech concludes the play. And now only an author of genius was needed to make the drama the artistic rendering of contemporary life, to give to the stage its fit and proper position, as a national art, dealing with all the interests of national life.

A similar development had been going on in the sphere of comedy. The transition from the moralities, in which the comic element consisted of exaggerations and elaboration of Herod and the devils, "required some writer who would be bold enough to throw overboard altogether the traditionary machinery and the personified abstractions of allegory, and to elevate to the first place the personal types which had gradually been introduced." Such a writer was John Heywood, the author of our first interludes, in some of which his aim is merely to excite mirth, in others to indulge in satire and point a moral. *The Four P's* (circ. 1540), *the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Poticary, and the Pedlar*, contains a certain amount of moral satire. The Pedlar has to decide which is the greatest liar of the first three. The circumstantial lies of the Pardoner and Palmer are outdone by

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the direct lies of the Poticary; and though there is much incidental satire with reference to the religious questions of the day, as for instance the Palmer on Pilgrimages—

> "And when ye have gone as far as ye can,
> For all your labor and gostely entente,
> Ye will come home as wise as ye wente"—

yet Heywood takes pains to show that he is a believer, trying to show that it is the abuse and not the use of the means of edification that he has been satirising. He stimulates faith, saying—

> "But where ye doubt, the truth not knowing,
> Believing the best, good may be growing,
> In judging the best, no harm at the least;
> In judging the worst, no good at the best."

And in matters of doctrine he says—

> "But best in these things it seemeth to me,
> To take no judgment upon ye;
> But as the Church doth judge or take them,
> So do ye receive or forsake them.
> So be you sure ye cannot err,
> But may be a fruitful follower."

Similar in purpose is the *Merry Play between the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate, and Neighbour Pratt* (circ. 1520). More purely humorous in its intention—and Heywood's humour is refreshing to the reader of the tedious moralities, "a ripple on the broad surface of good sense"—is the *Play of the Weather* (prob. 1533), which bears a great resemblance to the moralities. The gods who superintend the several phenomena of the weather,—Phœbus, Saturn, Æolus, and Phœbe,—make complaint against one another before Jupiter, who, through Merry Report, the Vice, summons human witnesses. The *Play of Love* reminds one rather of a feudal and middle-age story. Love and her victims constitute the characters of the play. The four human characters are the lover not beloved, the woman beloved not loving, the lover beloved, and one neither lover nor loved.

We have one comedy, *The Disobedient Child* (before 1560), by Thomas Ingelend, showing the transition from moralities to comedy proper in the mixture it contains of human and allegorical characters, before we come to the first real English comedy (1551, or earlier), *Ralph Roister Doister*, the work of an English scholar and schoolmaster called Udall, who has

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modelled it closely on the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus. The characters, with names such as Goodluck and Tristram Trusty, conduct themselves according to the promise of their names; but the characterisation, such as it is, can hardly be called symbolic. It gives the first faint suggestion of that classic idea of comic characterisation which was fully developed and dramatically expressed by Ben Jonson in his Theory of Humours.

Inferior both in plot and language is *Gammar Gurton's Needle* (prob. 1575), probably also the work of an English scholar and schoolmaster, John Still, who ended a successful life in 1607 as Bishop of Bath and Wells. The interest of the play is chiefly historic, and consists in the character of the fool Diccon. This character, together with that of Cacurgus in *Misogonus*, a play written probably in 1560 by Thomas Rychardes, illustrates the transition from the Vice of the moralities to the fully-developed clown of Shakspere's plays and in those of his contemporaries. A stimulus to development in this direction was probably given by the buffoons met with in Italian novels and plays, and a useful personage in which to embody the idea was found in the half-historic personality of Will Summer, the court fool of Henry VIII., employed both by Rychardes and later by Nash. English comedy was thus not only stimulated indirectly by Italy, by means of classic literature, by the plays of Plautus and Terence, but the direct national influence of Italy was seen in Gascoigne's *Supposes*, which suggested to Shakspere part of the plot of the *Taming of the Shrew* (acted 1566), a translation of *I Suppositi* of Ariosto, and in the list of plays acted at court from 1568 to 1580, which show the influence of the study of Italian literature.

To this point, then, had the drama attained about the year 1580. But the drama as an art was yet in its infancy. The cause of its first appearance, the desire to render religion and morality attractive, still lingered on in it. We have seen how dramatists, both tragic and comic, still vaguely or definitely continued to think it necessary to make their play contain a lesson, and chose their plots and treated them with reference to their capacity for pointing morals; and a conscious purpose of this kind is fatal to any art. Also we have seen how all that could attract the eye, that could give illusions through the senses to help out the reality of the dramatic conception, was neglected on the stage proper; and lastly, we must notice that this early drama contains only the faintest suggestions of that highest element of dramatic art—interest in character. It is deaths, as

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Fletcher says, which make a tragedy; it is a succession of comic incidents and practical jokes which make a comedy. Between *Ralph Roister Doister* and *As You Like It*—between *Gorboduc* and *Hamlet*—there is a comparatively small gap in time, but an immeasurable one from the point of view of dramatic art. It is, then, to the genius of those men who are called Shakspere's predecessors, and above all to the genius of Shakspere himself, that we owe the rapid and brilliant growth of the drama from 1580 to 1608; it is to the vigorous English genius, freed from restraint, and stimulated by national excitement and prosperity, that we owe this burst of unparalleled and peculiarly English and national art.

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CHAPTER VII.

SHAKSPERE'S PREDECESSORS.

LYLY, John, 1554-1606.—*The Woman in the Moon*, written before 1584; *Alexander, Campaspe, and Diogenes*, prob. 1584; *Sapho and Phao*, prob. 1584; *Endymion, the Man in the Moon*, prob. 1591; *Galathea*, prob. 1592; *Mydas*, prob. 1592; *Mother Bombie*, prob. 1594; *Love's Metamorphosis*, prob. 1601.

LODGE, Thomas, 1558(?)-1625.—*The Wounds of Civill War lively set forth in the true tragedies of Marius and Scylla*, acted 1590 circ.

NASH, Thomas, 1565 circ.-1602 circ.—*Summer's Last Will and Testament*, acted 1592.

PEELE, George, 1552 circ.-1597 circ.—*The Arraignment of Paris*, 1584; *Sir Clyomen and Sir Clamydes*, circ. 1584; *Pageants*, 1585-1591; *Chronicle of Edward I.*, 1593; *The Battle of Alcazar*, pub. 1594, acted by 1591; *Old Wives' Tale*, acted before 1595; *David and Bethsabe*, by 1598.

KYD, Thomas, *d.* 1594 circ.—*The Spanish Tragedy*, acted prob. in 1588.

GREENE, Robert, 1559-60(?)-1592.—*Orlando Furioso*, acted by 1591; *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, acted by 1591; *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, acted by 1592; *James IV. of Scotland*, acted by 1592; *George-à-Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield*, acted by 1592; *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, written with Lodge, acted by 1592.

THE drama was therefore comparatively unemancipated when Lyly, the first of that group of men called Shakspere's predecessors, lived and wrote. Shakspere was undoubtedly infinitely greater from every point of view than any of his contemporaries—Marlowe perhaps excepted—because of the youthful promise of his genius, which his short life did not allow him to mature. Yet the condition of the stage, after these artists had lived and written, compared with what it had been before, shows how greatly their work had tended to develop its possibilities. Shakspere at his best obeyed no rules: with the strength and freedom of genius he succeeded ultimately in emancipating himself from conventions and formulas; but the way was prepared for him by these men: they did much to

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loosen the hold of stage-convention, and in the work of some of them,—in the versification of Greene and Marlowe,—in the attempts at characterisation of Kyd,—we see more than hints of that dramatic power which makes the greatness of Shakspere's genius.

Among these men, Shakspere's contemporaries in point of time, but his predecessors in the dramatic art, Lyly stands not only first but alone. His work belongs to that earlier period of art and literature, that time of imitation and attempt, which prepared and gave place to the robuster and more original form of art which marks the most brilliant period of the Elizabethan age. In dramatic literature Lyly's work had the same characteristics that distinguished it in other fields of literature: there is visible the same careful attention to style, the same careful elaboration of literary details, the same fantastic and refined idealism.

Classical allusion, alliteration, antithesis, "the uncalled-for pun," are characteristic of his dramatic work, as they do his literary work. Lyly, during his university career, had acquired two things: an acquaintance with Ovid, to whom he was attracted by his taste for allegory, and a superficial but wide acquaintance with the classics, both of which he turned to account in his literary work. Most of his plays are derived from classical history or legend: and "from Jupiter himself down to the humblest serving-man all are familiar with passages from Ovid, Virgil, and Cicero." He it was who carried to its greatest extent the tendency of the time to introduce classical deities as representatives of corresponding qualities; and in most of his plays there is an allegorical meaning, not indeed as a rule deep or significant,—perhaps allusions to some small contemporary intrigue,—yet a meaning going beyond that of the actual facts of the plot, which gives ample exercise to the ingenuity and industry of his commentators. But what more than anything else stamps Lyly's work as belonging to a lower period of art than that of his companions in the group of Shakspere's predecessors is the mark which it bears of servility to the needs and taste of the court. Yet not the arduous work of the whole of Lyly's literary life, beginning with the publication of the *Euphues* in 1579 and lasting till his death in 1606,—not all the attacks which in defiance of friendship he made on Gabriel Harvey in the cause of his patron, the Earl of Oxford, not all his complimentary allegorical allusions to the Queen, not all his open, shameless flattery to her,—could gain for him the office he so much coveted—that of Master

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of the Revels. But the absence of high originality in Lyly's works, the absence of that robuster genius which characterised the works of Greene and Marlowe, the sameness and slightness of his thought,—was due to his prostration before the fashionable ideal, to the fact that he looked upon his work mainly as a profession, and as one that could be remunerative in proportion as it produced works that pleased; and that only secondarily did he regard it seriously as an art. Lyly's art indeed consisted in pleasing: if he can be said to have had genius, it must be found to consist in his perfect adaptability to the fashionable literary needs of the time, in his capacity for clothing slight thoughts in an agreeable, graceful form.

Lyly's first play, *The Woman in the Moon*, is, considering the tendencies of its author, tolerably straightforward and simple both in construction and language. Pandora, the woman in the moon, is created by Nature with the help of Concord and Discord in answer to the demands of the shepherds for a representative of the female sex. This being is gifted with various qualities by the gods, Saturn making her sullen, Jove proud, and Mars bloody-minded. She becomes involved in complications by Venus, and is ultimately banished to the moon, whither her husband Stesias is bound to follow her, he becoming the man in the moon as she the woman in the moon. In this play, whose plot is of little interest, commentators cannot even prove there are no clear allusions to contemporary events, though one goes so far as to think that there *is* a meaning in the story—a meaning which identifies Elizabeth with the moon—and this is the "piquantest thing in the whole play." Additional interest has been infused into two of Lyly's plays, *Midas* and *Endymion*, by finding in them significant but dark allusions to contemporary events. Midas is supposed to represent occasionally Philip of Spain, Diana Elizabeth, Lesbos being England, "which the gods pitched out of the world as not controlled by any in the world." Significant in its allusions, but less widely national in its tendency, is the play of *Endymion*. Endymion's sleep represents Leicester's imprisonment at Greenwich. The intervention of Eumenides, who pleads with Cynthia for the shortening of Endymion's sleep, is the mediation of the Earl of Sussex between Leicester and the Queen. Tellus, who is supposed to represent the Countess of Sheffield, to whom Leicester was clandestinely married, endeavours to draw Endymion away from Cynthia: "the sweetness of thy life: the bitterness of thy death." Floscula says to her—and the speech contains a specimen of the nature of the flattery that was administered

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to Elizabeth—"Madame, if you would compare the state of Cynthia with your own: and the height of Endimion his thoughts with the meanness of your fortune, you would rather yield than contend, being between you and her, no comparison: and rather wonder than rage at the greatness of his mind, being affected with a thing more than mortal." Endymion tries to hide "his thoughts, which are stitched to the stars," to dissemble his passion for Cynthia, the sweet Cynthia whom "time cannot touch, because she is divine, nor will offend because she is delicate;" but he cannot conceal it from Tellus. She sends Endymion into a deep sleep, from which he is revived by the kiss of Cynthia—"I will not be so stately, good Endimion, not to stoop to do thee good: and if thy liberty consist in a kiss from me, thou shalt have it: and though my mouth hath been heretofore as untouched as my thoughts, yet now to recover thy life (though to restore thy youth it be impossible), I will do that to Endimion which never yet mortal man could boast of heretofore, nor shall ever hope for hereafter."

There is a certain idealism in the play, refined perhaps almost to affectation, which suggests the really high standards of true Euphuism, of which Lyly and the so-called Euphuists are only degenerate followers. Endymion's elaborate speech to Cynthia has in it a touch of true chivalry:—"I honoured your highness above all the world; but to stretch it so far as to call it love, I never durst. There hath none pleased my eye but Cynthia, none delighted mine ears but Cynthia, none possessed my heart but Cynthia. I have forsaken all other fortunes to follow Cynthia, and here I stand ready to die if it please Cynthia. Such a difference hath the gods set between our states that all must be duty, loyalty and reverence, nothing (without it vouchsafe your highness) be termed love. My unspotted thoughts, my languishing body, my discontented love, let them obtain by princely favor that which to challenge they must not presume, only wishing of impossibilities: with imagination of which I will spend my spirits, and to myself, that no creature may hear, softly call it love. And if any urge to utter what I whisper, then will I name it honor. From thy sweet contemplation, if I be not driven, I shall live of all men the most content, taking more pleasure in mine aged thoughts, than ever I did in my youthful actions."

In the same way Phao, in the play of *Sapho and Phao*, is resigned to live for ever in love with the unattainable beauty and greatness of Sapho, though Sapho, through the influence of

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Venus, once returned this love. "O Sapho, thou hast Cupid in thy arms, I in my heart: thou kissest him for sport: I curse him for spite: yet will I not curse him, Sapho, whom thou kissest. This shall be my resolution, wherever I wander, to be as I were ever kneeling before Sapho, my loyalty unspotted though unrewarded. With as little malice will I go to my grave, as I did lie withal in my cradle. My life shall be spent in sighing and wishing: the one for my bad fortune, the other for Sapho's good."

But beyond these faint and rather affected suggestions of a sincere and noble chivalry, which Lyly gives in his *Conceits*, his influence on the drama was purely external. Not only did he make attention to literary externals obligatory on the dramatist, but he made popular the custom of writing dramas in prose instead of in the customary jingling rhyming verses. His play of *Campaspe*, slight in plot, being concerned merely with the loves of Alexander and Apelles for the captive maid Campaspe, probably did much for the popularisation of prose for dramatic expression,—Lyly, by his numerous conceits, endeavouring to make it as impressive and as harmonious as rhymed verse, in the same way as Marlowe, by "his high astounding terms," endeavoured to make his hearers forget the absence of rhyme.

With the works of Kyd, Peele, Greene, and Lodge, begin the robuster and more original form of the drama. The nation had passed through the stirring political struggles of the Reformation ending in the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and had begun to realise her national strength and unity. A period of comparative calm had followed a period of intense excitement. The nation was still conscious of the necessity of showing a united front, but after 1588 it was on the aggressive against its enemies. The struggle still continued; it was exciting, but not deadly or precarious enough to absorb all the energies of the nation. Dramatic art reflected the excitement of national life.

This early drama was indeed a drama of struggle; its tragedies were tragedies of killing and murder and bloodshed. The stage at this time was as much beholden to hatred, revenge, murder, and suicide, as Bacon says it was to love. "Give me the man who will all others kill, and last of all himself," says a character in Fletcher's *Humorous Lieutenant;* and indeed this, intended for a satire, was no exaggeration of the tendencies of a hero at this period of the drama. Tragedy is a "minion of the night." "To thee," says a typical dramatist of the time, through

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the mouth of one of his characters in a play which is a fit representative of the dramatic tone of the time,

> "I'll sing
> Upon a harp made of dead Spanish bones,
> The proudest instrument the world affords:
> When thou in crimson Jollity shalt bathe
> Thy limbs as black as mine, in springs of blood
> Still gushing from the conduit head of Spain.
> To thee that never blushest, though thy cheeks
> Are full of blood, O St. Revenge, to thee
> I consecrate my murders, all my stabs,
> My bloody labors, tortures, stratagems,
> The volume of all wounds that wound for me.
> Mine is the stage, thine is the tragedy."

Comedies, says Kyd in his *Spanish Tragedy*, are fit for common wits:

> "But to present a kingly troupe withal,
> Give me a stately written tragedy;
> Tragedia Cothurnata, fitting kings,
> Containing matter and not common things."

"Blood," says Charles Lamb, "is made as light of in some of these old dramas as money in a modern sentimental comedy, and as *this* it is given away till it reminds us that it is nothing but counters, so *that* is spilt till it affects us no more than its representative, the paint of the property man in the theatre." Blood and murder and battle, and deaths of all sorts—the "matter" of these tragedies—became thus things only too common. Greene and Peele, to become uncommon, had to seek for tragedy in the comparatively uneventful history of heroes of the Old Testament. But mixed with this conception of life as a struggle, ending in a tragedy, are nobler ideals, nobler elements, —the consciousness of being a great nation shows itself in the interest taken in history. The admiration given to the Queen is not now so much the result of chivalry. There is a patriotic enthusiasm felt for her as the representative of the national unity, as the head of a great country which had done glorious things and had a greater future before it; there is interest shown in the social affairs of the day; and lastly, there begins to be a human interest given to the characters of the personages of the drama: they begin to be real men and women; the interest of their characters is often subordinated to the interest of striking incident and startling situation, yet they represent men and

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women upon whose characters circumstances have some effect. Greene in his historical plays, Peele in his scriptural plays, Kyd in his Spanish tragedy,—each made an epoch in the immediate pre-Shaksperian drama. And these men had none of them high, conscious ideas of their art. They wrote quickly, spontaneously, uncritically; they led lives of the wildest Bohemianism; they recognised no belief which had power over their conduct; they exercised no self-control over their actions; their lives were subject to the greatest vicissitudes, "now strutting in a silken suit, now begging by the way;" they spent their leisure and their wealth in fighting and drinking, generally dying in misery, "lying down laden with many cares." No wonder that they brought discredit on the stage,—made it more disgraceful in the eyes of the Puritans; no wonder that Nash, after Greene's death and the publication of his *Groatsworth of Wit*, felt it incumbent on him to write the highly reasonable but ineffectual pamphlet, *Why should Art answer for the Infirmitie of Manners*. Greene's miserable death in poverty, the result of the most wanton dissipation,—the publication of his advice "to those gentlemen, his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wit in making plays,"—his wish that they should exercise a better wisdom and avoid extremities,—revealed the private life of the dramatists, and seemed to confirm the Puritans in their hatred of the stage. "If woful experience may move you, gentlemen, to beware of unheard of wretchedness, I entreat you to take heed. I doubt not you will look with sorrow on your time past and endeavour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not," he says to Marlowe, "thou famous gracer of tragedies, that Green, who has said with thee there is no God, should now give glory unto his greatness: he has spoken unto me with a voice of thunder, and I have felt he is a god that can punish enemies. . . . Young Juvenal," he says to Lodge, "sweet boy, be advised; get not many enemies by bitter words;" and to Peele, "Thou no less deserving than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferior,—driven, as myself, to extreme shifts,—a little have I to say unto thee. . . . Base-minded men all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned. . . . I know the least of my demerits merits this miserable death, but wilful striving against known truth exceedeth all the terrors of my soul." Poor Greene, with his conception of a God that can punish enemies, was little likely to reform his comrades: not till they felt the thunder of the divine voice in the pressure of their miseries, would they seek as he had done, a repentance which life could not test.

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But even Greene in his dying moments is roused to professional jealousy by the remembrance of "those puppets, that speak from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colors. Trust them not: for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers that, with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes-fac-totum, is in his own conceit, the only Shakscene in the country."

This well-known allusion was probably called forth by jealousy of what must have been Shakspere's success as a dramatist. What was then most demanded from a dramatist was not the invention of a new plot, characterisation, literary finish, and elaboration, but quickness in execution, the capacity for dramatising stories and well-known legends or ballads, the quick sense of what would look well on the stage, the management of incident, and the grouping of character,—talents which no one but an actor could possess. The dramatic profession was not at this time looked upon as an art: it was a trade—a business. Dramatic authors in the pay of a company had to alter, to adapt, to work with others, to arrange, revise; a writer of plays working for success regarded originality as the last requisite. Originality went for nothing, for a play passed through many hands, and its authorship could rarely be distinctly assigned. In a profession like this Shakspere could not fail to compete successfully with his contemporaries. We know that all through his dramatic career he never cared to invent plots, generally borrowing them from some history or romance; and his wonderful capacity for dramatising story, his capacity for adapting material to the stage, his quickness, would without doubt enable him to leave his contemporaries far behind. Greene's anger may have been but a sudden burst of spite, for, as a rule, actors were friendly among themselves; their co-operation was generally smooth; the memory of their good fellowship is preserved in some lines of Heywood, recording the nicknames by which they were known to each other. Chettle, the publisher of the *Groatsworth of Wit*, offered afterwards a liberal apology for his share in circulating the libel,—"I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault,"—and speaks of Shakspere's uprightness of dealing, his facetious grace. There was no real discredit, as the dramatic profession then was, in being a Johannes-fac-totum, for the stage was a purely professional calling. Shakspere trusted his fame, not to his dramas but to his *Venus and Adonis* and his "sugared sonnets," as Marlowe did his to *Hero and Leander*. Only in

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the field of poetry proper did they consider themselves as artists: in the early period of the Elizabethan drama, till Ben Jonson arose to fight his great fight against the principle, dramatists were men of business with no artistic ideal.

Was it mere wanton desire to pun, or was it the bitterest satire, that made Ben Jonson designate Kyd as "sporting"? Kyd's sport, as Mr. Ward observes, is indeed among "the grisly horrors of death:" the one drama, to which he owes his fame, belongs only too obviously to the blood and thunder sensational epoch, before art had sufficient self-confidence to deal with the commonplace. The scene of the Spanish tragedy is, as the name denotes, laid in Spain, and the incidents of the plot pretend to be from Spanish history. It opens with the entrance of the ghost of Andrea, lover of Belimperia the heroine, who had been treacherously slain in battle, but who has been allowed to return to the sphere of action with Revenge. With great *naïveté* Revenge explains their connection with the forthcoming drama—

> "Here sit we down to see the mystery,
> And serve for chorus to this tragedy."

Revenge evidently ministers to Andrea's desires; and, as Mr. Ward says, "results adequate to the wishes of the most resentful shade are achieved"—

> "Aye, now my hopes have end in their effects
> When blood and sorrow finish my desires.
> Horatio murdered in his father's bower;
> Vile Serberine by Pedringano slain;
> False Pedringano hang'd by quaint device;
> Fair Isabella by herself undone;
> Prince Balthazar by Belimperia stabb'd:
> The Duke of Castile and his wicked son
> Both done to death by old Hieronimo;
> My Belimperia fallen, as Dido fell;
> And good Hieronimo slain by himself:
> Aye, these were spectacles to please my soul."

Crude and unemancipated as this tragedy may appear, it gives Kyd a high rank among Shakspere's predecessors, because it not only brings us into the region of real human passion (the scenes between Horatio and Belimperia, as Mr. Ward points out, being done with tenderness and grace),—not only did it by its plot of a play within a play probably suggest the episodes of Hamlet to Shakspere,—but because it shows that Kyd had the power of under-

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standing, even if he could not exhibit, the interest of the action of incident upon character. The real interest of the play consists in showing the effect of the murder of a son, Horatio, upon the mind of a father, who, half mad with grief, slowly prepares his revenge, working it out in the same way that Hamlet does his. How far Kyd developed this power on his own account, or how far he only indicated what was to become the truest and highest interest of the drama, cannot be quite accurately decided. The best and most spirited scene in the play—a scene where the force of real passion is strikingly drawn—is supposed not to be by Kyd's hand. Hawkins, blind to its merits, puts it in the notes of his edition as having been "foisted in" by the players; Charles Lamb, who justly calls it "the salt of the old play," suggests Ford or Webster to have been the author who made the addition. Jonson, who took a decided interest in this tragedy, alluding to it in no less than six of his plays, seems hardly capable of depicting the wild pathetic abandonment to grief of Hieronimo in this scene. Some more "potent spirit," Charles Lamb thinks, must have furnished it. "It is full of that wild solemn, preternatural cast of grief which bewilders us in the Duchess of Malfy." Hieronimo can think of nothing but his murdered son—

> "He loved his loving parents;
> He was my comfort and his mother's joy,
> The very arm that did hold up our house,
> Our hopes were stored up in him,
> None but a damned murderer could hate him.
> . . . . . .
> Well, Heaven is heaven still!
> And there is Nemesis, and furies,
> And things called whips,
> And they sometimes do meet with murderers."

"Villain," he cries, to one who implies that he is mad,

> "thou liest, and thou doest naught
> But tell me I am mad: thou liest,—
> I am not mad:
> I know thee to be Pedro and he Jaques,
> I'll prove it to thee, and were I mad, how could I?
> Where was she the same night, when my Horatio was murdered?
> She should have shone: search thou the book.
> . . . . . .
> Had the moon shone in my boy's face, there was a kind of grace
> That I know, nay, I do know, had the murderer seen him
> His weapon would have fallen, and cut the earth,
> Had he been framed of naught but blood and death;

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> Alack, when mischief doth it knows not what,
> What shall we say to mischief?"

He welcomes an interview with a painter, who comes to seek for justice, his son also having been murdered—

> "O ambitious beggar, wouldst thou have that
> That lives not in the world?
> Why, all the undelved mines cannot buy
> An ounce of justice, 'tis a jewel so inestimable:
> I tell thee, God hath engrossed all justice in his hands,
> And there is none but what comes from him."

"Was thy son murdered?" he asks, and the painter replies, "Ay, sir; no man did hold a son so dear."

> "*Hier.* What, not as thine? That's a lie
> As massy as the earth: I had a son
> Whose least unvalued hair did weigh
> A thousand of thy son's, and he was murdered.
> . . . Come, let's talk wisely now:
> Was thy son murdered?
> *Pain.* Ay, sir.
> *Hier.* So was mine.
> How dost thou take it? Art not sometime mad?
> Is there no tricks that come before thine eyes?
> . . . . . .
> Art a painter? Can'st paint me a tear, a wound?
> A groan or a sigh? Can'st paint me such a tree as this?"

. . . "Look you, sir, do you see, I'd have you paint me in my gallery, in your oil colours, matted, and draw me five years younger than I am: do you see sir? let five years go, let them go—my wife Isabella standing by me, with a speaking look to my son Horatio, which should intend to this or some such like purpose: 'God bless thee, my sweet son,' and my hand leaning upon his head thus, sir, do you see? may it be done?"

He is to paint him then—this son murdered—run through and through with villains' swords, and the murderers, "their beards of Judas' own colour," and then—

"Well, sir, then bring me forth, bring me through alley and alley, still with a distracted countenance going along. Let the clouds scowl, make the moon dark, the stars extinct, the wind blowing, the bells tolling, the owls shrieking, the toads croaking, the minutes jarring, and the clock striking twelve. And then at last, sir, starting behold a man hanging, and tottering and tottering, as you know the wind will wave a man, and I with a trice to cut him down. And looking upon him by the advantage of my torch, find it to be my son Horatio. There you may show a passion, there you may show a passion. Draw me like old Priam of Troy, crying,

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'the house is a-fire, the house is a-fire:' and the torch over my head; make me curse, make me rave, make me cry, make me mad, make me well again, make me curse hell, invocate, and in the end leave me in a trance and so forth?

Pain. And is this the end?

Hier. O no, there is no end, the end is death and madness."

Whoever be the author of this scene, it still remains to Kyd's credit that he could conceive, as the central interest of a play, the development and play of character, and thus suggest such scenes as this.

It is to Peele and Greene that the pre-Shaksperian drama is most indebted for improvement in style and in versification. The richness of language, the dignity, the freshness and sweetness of Elizabethan English, was first foreshadowed in the dramas of these two. It is true that they are often exaggerated and pompous; that they have the defects of these qualities. Like all Elizabethans they were very unequal, the inequality of their powers being heightened not only by their wild irregular life, but by the fact that they wrote for money; yet they gave hints of powers which, if sustained, would have caused them to be ranked in the first grade of artists. Peele's first work of importance, *The Arraignment of Paris*, was written in the unemancipated form and style. It was in rhyme; an ingenious turning of the story of Paris and the apple into a compliment to the Queen. Diana, who finally judges, takes the apple away from Venus and gives it to Elizabeth. Peele has enough artistic power to prevent his verse from degenerating altogether into the ordinary jog-trot. At times it sinks below mediocrity, as in the truly dull and moral speech of Pallas—

> "To stand on terms of beauty as you take it,
> Believe me, ladies, is but to mistake it;"

yet in other passages it triumphantly overcomes the tendency that rhyme often shows to become merely a monotonous jingle, as in the speech of Enone as she sits under the tree with Paris:—

> "And whereon then shall be my roundelay?
> For thou hast heard my store long since, dare-say,
> How Saturn did divide his kingdom tho'
> To Jove to Neptune and to Dis below:
> How mighty men made foul successless war
> Against the gods, and state of Jupiter:
> How Phorcyas' 'ympe, that was so trick and fair,
> That tangled Neptune in her golden hair,
> Became a Gorgon for her lewd misdeed.

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A pretty fable, Paris, for to read;
A piece of cunning, trust me for the nonce,
That wealth and beauty alter men to stones:
How Salmacis, resembling idleness,
Turns men to women all through wantonness:
How Pluto raught Queen Pluto's daughter thence,
And what did follow of that love offence.
Of Daphne turned into the laurel tree,
That shows a mirror of virginity:
How fair Narcissus, tooting on his shade,
Reproves disdain, and tells how form doth vade:
How cunning Philomela's needle tells
What force in love, what wit in sorrow, dwells:
What pains unhappy souls abide in hell,
They say, because on earth, they lived not well.—
Ixion's wheel, proud Tantal's pining woe,
Prometheus' torment, and a many moe:
How Danaus' daughters ply their endless task,
What toil, the toil of Sisyphus doth ask."

Sir Clyomen and Sir Clamydes, containing a character, Subtle Shift, interesting in the history of the development of the Vice of the moralities into the Shaksperian clown, is also in rhyme, and in very bad rhyme. Unemancipated in plot, sensational in incident, is the *Battle of Alcazar*, a tragedy whose interest turns on this battle, which was fought for the possession of the African throne, and in which an Englishman took part. Though the versification of this play corresponds on the whole to the incidents, and is as full of rant as the plot is of exaggerations, yet, as Charles Lamb points out, there occur occasional passages in which the height and fulness of the language corresponds to the greatness of the occasion. His language has a touch of that barbaric splendour, that "extravagant vein of promise" of that master of "high astounding terms," Marlowe. Muly Mahamet, driven from his throne, robs the lioness to feed his fainting wife Calipolis.

"Hold thee, Calipolis, feed and faint no more,
This flesh I forced from a lionness:
Meat of a princess, for a princess meat.
Learn by her noble stomach to esteem
Penury plenty in extremest dearth,
Who, when she saw her foragement bereft,
Pined not in melancholy or childish fear;
But as brave minds are strongest in extremes,
So she, redoubling her former force,
Ranged through the woods, and rent the bleeding vaults
Of proudest savages, to save herself.
Feed then, and faint not, fair Calipolis,
For rather than fierce famine shall prevail

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To gnaw thy entrails with her thorny teeth,
The conquering lionness shall attend on thee,
And lay huge heaps of slaughtered carcases
As bulwarks in her way to keep her back.
I will provide thee of a princely ospray,
That as she flieth over fish in pools,
The fish shall turn their glistering bellies up,
And thou shalt take the liberal choice of all;
Jove's stately bird with wide commanding wings
Shall hover still about thy princely head,
And beat down fowls by shoals into thy lap,—
Feed then, and faint not, fair Calipolis."

But Peele's genius reached its height in his play of *David and Bethsabe*. It is supposed that about this time plays on scriptural subjects were popular with managers, as tending to show that the drama could deal with subjects not exclusively mundane and worldly,—that it was capable of treating serious subjects with true dignity and earnestness. The scenes between David and Bethsabe are creditable to Peele's power as a dramatist and a poet, to his management of blank verse—

"Now comes my lover tripping like the roe
And brings my longings tangled in her hair;"

but they did not much advance this object. The scenes really impressive in their thought and execution are those between David and Nathan—

"Thus Nathan said unto his lord the king:
There were two men both dwellers in one town;
The one was mighty and exceeding rich
In oxen, sheep, and cattle of the field;
The other poor, having nor ox nor calf,
Nor other cattle save one little lamb,
Which he had bought and nourished by his hand:
And it grew up and fed with him and his,
And ate and drank as he and his were wont,
And in his bosom slept and was to him
As was his daughter or his dearest child.
There came a stranger to this wealthy man,
And he refused and spared to take his own,
Or of his store to dress or make his meat,
But took the poor man's sheep, partly poor man's store
And dressed it for the stranger in the house;
What, tell me, shall be done to him for this?"

And the scene in which David prays—

"Thou power
That now art framing of the future world,
Knowst all to come, not by the course of heaven,

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By frail conjecture of inferior signs,
By monstrous floods, by flights and flocks of birds,
By bowels of a sacrificed beast,
Or by the figures of some hidden art:
But by a true and natural presage,
Laying the ground and perfect architect
Of all our actions now before thine eyes,
From Adam to the end of Adam's seed:
O heaven, protect my weakness with thy strength,
So look on me that I may view thy face,
And see these secrets written on thy brows;
O sun, come dart thy rays upon my morn,
That now mine eyes eclipsed to the earth,
May brightly be refin'd and shine to heaven;
Transform me from the flesh that I may live
Before my death regenerate with thee.
O thou great God ravish my earthly sprite,
That for a time a more than human skill
May feed the organons of all my sense;
That when I think, thy thoughts may be my guide,
And when I speak, I may be made by choice
The perfect echo of thy heavenly voice."

Though Peele by no means always kept up to this level, yet he will be distinguished amongst Shakspere's predecessors as being capable of a style at once graceful, dignified, and impassioned, giving at times evidence of a self-control that could keep feeling within moral and artistic limits.

Lyly in his *Campaspe* had, by his introduction of Diogenes, declared "his intention of mixing mirth with counsel and discipline with delight, thinking it not amisse in the same garden to sow pot-herbs that we set flowers." The same idea probably occurred to Greene. A gentleman of the time, in questionable verse, says of him—

"His gadding muse, although it ran of love,
Yet did he secretly moralise his songs,
Nor ever gave the looser cause to laugh,
Nor men of judgment for to be offended."

Thus Greene apparently always had in his plays a moral tendency that did not show itself in his life. And the work by which he is best remembered, and which he wrote in conjunction with Lodge, *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, had for its idea to warn London, through the mouth of Hosea, who acts, as Mr. Ward says, as a kind of chorus, applying Jonah's injunctions, addressed to Nineveh, to London. It is evident, however, that this moral purpose, unlike most conscious moral purposes,

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did not deduct from the freshness and vivacity of Greene's style. It is for these qualities of spontaneity and grace that he is most noted.

"O had I tears like to the silver streams
That from the Alpine mountains sweetly stream,
Or had I sighs the treasures of remorse,
As plentiful as Eolus hath blasts,
I then would tempt the heavens with my laments,
And pierce the throne of mercy by my sighs."

As far as facility and ease of expression go these lines might have been written by Shakspere himself. Very impressive and dignified is the lamentation of Jonah over Israel—

"Irreligious zeal
Encampeth there where virtue was enthroned,
. . . . . .
Devotion sleeps in cinders of content."

And very direct is the warning addressed by the prophet Deas to London—

"When disobedience reigneth in the child,
And princes' ears by flattery be beguiled:
When laws do pass by favor, not by truth:
When falsehood swarmeth both in old and youth:
When gold is made a god to wrong the poor,
And charity exil'd from rich men's door:
When men by wit do labour to disprove
The plagues for sin sent down by God above:
When great men's ears are stopt to good advice,
And apt to hear those tales that feed their vice,
Woe to the land, for from the east shall rise
A lamb of peace, the scourge of vanities,
The judge of truth, the patron of the just,
Who soon will lay presumption in the dust,
And give the humble poor their hearts' desire,
And doom the worldlings to eternal fire.
Repent all you that hear! for fear of plagues.
O London, this and more doth swarm in thee:
Repent! Repent! for why, the Lord doth see;
With trembling, pray and mind what is amiss,
The sword of justice drawn already is."

"Repent you all that hear for fear of plagues," is characteristic of Greene's morality. This is a work which, in its conscious desire to teach virtue, is akin to Sackville's *Mirror for Magistrates*, and Gascoigne's *Steel Glass;* it makes the struggle, so rarely successful and so frequent with the Teutonic mind, to combine entertainment and a sermon.

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The least emancipated of his dramas, the one which clings most to the old sensational ideal, is *Orlando Furioso*, in which, as Collier says, he has tried "to compound a drama which should exhibit an unusual variety of characters in the dress of Europeans, Asiatics, and Africans,—to mix them up with as much rivalship, love, jealousy, and fighting as could be brought within the compass of five acts." Nevertheless the verse of this extravagant play is in Greene's best manner, smooth and pleasing: he does not so often tend to rant and pomposity as he does in the *Comical History of Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, where incidents as striking as those in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, seem to demand some corresponding effort on the part of the language. But it is in *George-à-Greene, Pinner of Wakefield*, a play which deals with forest and country life,—with the adventures of George-à-Greene, keeper of the penfolds belonging to the common lands near Wakefield,—that Greene's powers of versification have adequate stimulus; it has, as Mr. Ward says, the distinctive note of Greene, a native English freshness,—"that air blown from over English homesteads and English meads which we recognise as a Shaksperian characteristic, and which belongs to none but a wholly and truly national art," . . . "it breathes the spirit of the old ballads of the Robin Hood cycle."

In the *Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* we see, by the delicate and poetic compliment paid to the Queen at the end of the play, that Greene could also successfully lend his pen to the most courtly and Euphuistic uses—

> "Apollo's heleotrope shall stoop,
> And Venus' hyacinth shall veil her top;
> Juno shall shut her gilly flowers up,
> And Pallas' bay shall bask her brightest green;
> Ceres' carnation in consort with those
> Shall stoop and wonder at Diana's rose."

Lodge, Nash, Chettle, and Munday, all worthy, especially the two first, to be classed among Shakspere's predecessors, distinguished themselves as much in the field of prose as in that of the drama. Lodge wrote a pamphlet in *Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays*, in itself not interesting, but noteworthy as having roused the famous Gosson who, by his efforts against the stage and art in general, was to rouse some one still more famous, viz. Sir Philip Sidney. But Lodge's name is memorable as being that of the author of "*Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacie*, found in his cell at Silistra," a novel which gave Shak-

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spere his material for *As You Like It.* His fame as a novelist and a pamphleteer, and as a writer of pastorals, outweighs what he earned as the author of a stirring tragedy of *The Wounds of Civil War, lively set forth in the tragedies of Marius and Scylla,* full of striking scenes and violent vigorous speeches. So, too, the part that Nash, as a pamphleteer, took in defending the stage from Puritan attack,—a line in which he found full scope for his genius for invective, for his erudition, for his vigorous rhetoric, for that wonderful style which could illumine any subject,—obscures his work as a dramatist. Of his dramas we have two remains, *The Isle of Dogs,* which was never printed, and *Summer's Last Will and Testament,* the latter interesting as showing how the old morality and allegoric ideas still lingered on. It is something between a show and a morality. Summer calls the other seasons before him, with their companions, such as Bacchus, Orion, etc. Chettle and Munday both belonged to the lower order of dramatists. Chettle is known as the author of the ghastly tragedy of *Hoffmann, and a Revenge for a Father,* in which the hero says that the tragedy he shall accomplish shall surpass those of Thyestis, Tereus, and Jocasta. He is said to be the author of fifteen others, and to have contributed to thirty-four more. Munday had considerable fame in his generation. Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia,* alludes to him as "the best plotter;" he had evidently acquired such a literary and dramatic reputation that he came under the unfavourable notice of Jonson, who could never feel at peace with those dramatists who regarded the stage as their profession and nothing else; he probably ridiculed him in the *Case is Altered* as Antonio Balladino. Probably the praise of Meres in this case was as indiscriminate as that he bestowed on Robert Wilson, who, he says, "for learning and extemporal wit was without compeer or compare;" for of Munday and Wilson nothing remains to mark them in any way even as the equals still less as the superiors, of their companions in this group.

The most striking characteristic of these men, as indeed of all Elizabethans, is their versatility. Their works, like their lives, show their varied interests and powers. To the Elizabethan

> "Virtue is ever sowing of her seeds
> In the trenches for the soldier; in the wakeful study
> For the scholar; in the furrows of the sea
> For men of our profession; of all which
> Rise and spring up honor."

Peele was an actor, probably a manager. Lodge had tra-

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velled—had had experience as a soldier: he, Greene, and Nash showed by pamphleteering the interest they took in social and political affairs. In their works they reflect the full and varied interests of Elizabethan art. But none of them had that harmonising power which turns versatility into genius. There was yet, however, to come one artist, Marlowe, who, by the further development of the powers hinted at in the work of these men, was to make the position of Shakspere, in his age and in his profession, a little less isolated.

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CHAPTER VIII.

MARLOWE.

MARLOWE, *b.* 1563-64; educated at King's School, Canterbury, and at Corpus Christi (Bene't) College, Cambridge; *d.* 1593.—*Tamburlaine the Great*, before 1587; *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*, 1588; *Jew of Malta*, 1588-90; *Massacre of Paris*, 1590 circ.; *Edward II.*, 1590 circ.; *Tragedy of Queen Dido*, prob. left unfinished at Marlowe's death, and completed by Nash, prob. 1594.

MARLOWE is the greatest of Shakspere's predecessors; his work comes nearest, both in form and in idea, to that of the greatest of English dramatists. It may have been time alone that prevented him from making still narrower the gulf that separated him from his great contemporary; for Marlowe, born in 1564, died in 1593. After that university training common to all Elizabethan dramatists,—a training which gave enough knowledge of classics to allow of their use as literary appendages, as mines from which could be extracted illustrations, apt quotations, strings of well-sounding names, etc.,—his life seems to have been one of the wildest Bohemianism, ending in inglorious death in some trivial quarrel.

1593
1564
29

> "Unhappy in thy end,
> Marley, the Muse's darling for thy verse,
> Fit to write passions for the souls below,
> If any wretched souls in passion speak."

Of the genius, of the very great promise, of that "wit lent from Heaven," neither contemporaries nor posterity can have any doubt. It was never obscured in his works by "those vices sent from hell;" even Greene's solemn address to him in the *Groatsworth of Wit*—which begins by greeting him as an atheist: "Wonder not, thou famous gracer of tragedies, that Green, who has said with thee there is no God"—cannot convict him of wilful and utter abandonment to a life of thoughtless dissipation. Marlowe was not like the Vanbrughs, Farquhars, and

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Wycherleys of after-days, who felt at home and satisfied with wickedness, and to whom life was no problem. Marlowe lived the life from which at first there was no escape for the Elizabethan dramatists; he experienced to the full all the temptations to which they as actors and artists were exposed, and which was often the ruin of many eager emotional natures. But life to Marlowe had many interests, personal and impersonal; it had good sides as well as bad; it was not merely a thing to be enjoyed with thoughtless self-indulgence, it was a problem in itself; it offered food for a curiosity, both high and low. "*The History of Faustus*," says Charles Lamb, "must have been delectable food for a mind like Marlowe's: he loved to wander in fields where curiosity is forbidden to go, to approach the dark gulf near enough to look in, to be busied in speculations which are the rottenest part of the core of the fruit that fell from the tree of knowledge." But whether or not these speculations are the rottenest fruit of the tree of knowledge, the fact that Marlowe indulged in them proves that he had a soul, and that it was unsatisfied. We feel that his wide and active mind—interested in the problems of life and death, interested in human character, in the play of human emotions—was undeniably a great mind, great enough, perhaps, to be modified by and to assimilate experience instead of being entirely moulded by it. We shall never know whether, like Shakspere, he would, if he had lived, have succeeded in emancipating himself from the necessary degradations of his surroundings as an actor and dramatist; we can only guess from the true tone of power and sometimes of dignity that distinguishes some of his work that he might in time have acquired that self-control which would have prevented him from being the victim of circumstances, and without which the best talents and the best impulses both in actual and imaginative life are wasted. He might in time have acquired that deeper insight, that tolerance, which is only another word for sympathy, which specially distinguishes Shakspere, and which rarely comes save to those who have lived a long and independent life full of experience. Drayton, whose opinion is worthy of respect, bears full testimony to his genius—

> "Next Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs,
> Had in him those brave translunary things
> That the first poets had: his raptures were
> All air and fire, which made his verses clear;
> For that fine madness still he did retain
> That should possess a poet's brain."

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And he had in addition to that "fine madness"—that unrestrained freedom of thought and imagination which often makes a Bohemian life the only possible one for an artist—an understanding of high and deep passion, of aspirations which a debased mind could never have grasped. Marlowe felt with Shelley—

> "It needs not the hell that bigots frame
> To punish those who err."

He knew perhaps "the varied agonies" of a spiritual remorse, "that prey like scorpions on the springs of life." He makes Mephistopheles reply thus to Faust's question as to the bounds of hell—

> "Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it;
> Thinkst thou that I, that saw the face of God
> And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
> Am not tormented with ten thousand devils
> In being deprived of eternal bliss?"

Remorse is the hell into which are plunged the souls of those that have done evil; and although we may wonder whether it be possible for the Archfiend to be a prey to this nobler sort of torment (Goethe's Mephistopheles, for certain, never felt it), yet we cannot doubt but that Marlowe had felt it; and we cannot help feeling that with him it might have developed into a lasting power over conduct, nobler than Greene's fear of a "God that can punish enemies,"—that Marlowe, if he had lived, might have been a rival to Shakspere in more than mere youthful promise. We must not forget also, in estimating the value of Marlowe's work, that he had much pioneering work to do; that he found the stage more shackled by conventions, more oppressed by barbarisms, than Shakspere; that both in choice of subject and in versification Marlowe's energy was employed in working reforms by which Shakspere profited.

Like Shakspere and all other dramatists of the time, he relied for fame on his purely poetic compositions. On the poem of *Hero and Leander*, of which, however, he only lived to complete what forms the two first sestiads; on his translations of some of Ovid's elegies, of which, unhappily, he chose the worst,—he meant to rest his fame: but a more justly discriminating posterity finds that his fame has been earned as a dramatist, as the capable artistic reformer of dramatic blank verse, as the author of plays which first (if we except the Spanish tragedy) introduce real interest in character, which, by the superiority of their sub-

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jects and treatment, raised once and for all the dramatic level, and "made it impossible for the Elizabethan stage to go back to the bloody horrors and tame declamations of the early Shaksperian drama."

Yet Marlowe's first play of *Tamburlaine* belongs in plot to the old sensational drama; it is in the introduction and treatment of really human and ordinary incidents, such as, for instance, of the scenes between Tamburlaine and Zenocrate, that its superiority lies. The plot is made up of gigantic incidents and awful events. Tamburlaine, originally a Scythian shepherd, rises to be conqueror of the world. In spite of the tremendous occurrences there is a certain monotony and lack of excitement in the play, for against Tamburlaine nothing can stand: everything and everybody give way, leaving him invariably the conqueror. Marlowe has not the power of making his terrible world seem real: indeed it would require the strongest and weirdest imagination to transport us back to this hideous past: for the most part we realise Tamburlaine as we should do any monster out of a fairy tale. Driving in a chariot drawn by two mighty kings, the kings of Syria and Trebizond, he is represented to us as scourging them and addressing them as "pampered jades," because they cannot draw more than twenty miles a day. "To make you fierce," he says

> "and fit my appetite.
> You shall be fed with flesh as raw as blood,
> And drink in pails the strongest muscadel:
> If you can live with it, then live and draw
> My chariot swifter than the racking clouds.
> If not, then die like beasts, and fit for naught
> But perches for the black and fatal ravens:
> Thus am I right, the scourge of highest Jove."

This bloody-minded king, who, "without respect of sex, degree, or age, raiseth all his foes with fire and sword," is described as

> "Of stature tall and straightly fashioned:
> Like his desire lift upwards and divine,
> So large of limb, his joints so strongly knit;
> Such breadth of shoulder as might mainly bear
> Old Atlas' burden. 'Twixt his manly pitch
> A pearl more worth than all the world is placed,
> Wherein, by curious sovereignty of art,
> Are fixed his piercing instruments of sight,
> Whose fiery circles bear encompassed
> A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres,
> That guide his steps and actions to the throne

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Where honour sits invested royally.
Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,
Thirsting with sovereignty and love of arms.
His lofty brows in folds do figure death:
And in their smoothness, amity, and life,
About them hangs a knot of amber hair,
Wrapped in curls as fierce Achilles was:
On which the breath of heaven delights to play,
Making it dance with wanton majesty:
His armes long, his fingers snowy-white,
Betokening valour and excess of strength;
In every part proportioned like the man
Should make the world subdue to Tamburlaine."

Verse of this lofty, haughty, not to say pompous strain—blank verse, whose "high astounding terms" shall mark the metre and render it impressive—is the fit characteristic of this sensational tragedy. Only occasionally does Marlowe fail in sustaining that grandiloquent manner which should match the majestic height of the personages and occurrences. The King of Persia, tired of state and its vicissitudes,—who wishes humbly to bury his crown "in a simple hole," and indeed begins to dig with that object,—is meant perhaps to contrast with the stately, all-conquering Tamburlaine; but his mean figure and his mean language produce a bathos quite grotesque and inartistic in its depth; the dispute between him and Tamburlaine is a mean bickering, worthy only of stage-clowns. But really excellent are the scenes where Marlowe leaves the stage conventions which bade the dramatists treat of emotions and occurrences quite beyond their experience, and comes into the sphere of real passion and emotion. With characteristic Elizabethan genius, delighting in the play of unbridled feeling, he draws the scene of madness, when the wife of Bajazet, the Soldan of Turkey, the tortured prisoner of Tamburlaine, insane with misery, commits suicide; and the scenes between Tamburlaine and Zenocrate, when the great conqueror has fallen a victim to a love touching in its strength and its constancy, are perhaps the best in the play. Zenocrate also loves him, and in order to marry him has given up her betrothed: when she dies his grief is deep and excessive. He is furious when Death thwarts him, robbing him of what he values more than his conquests. After her death he still continues devoted to her memory: he has her portrait hung before him—

"Sweet picture of divine Zenocrate,
That hanging here will draw the gods from heaven,
And cause the stars fixed in the southern arc

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As pilgrims travel to our hemisphere,
Only to gaze upon Zenocrate."

Characteristic, too, of the age is the imagery with which Marlowe adorns his allusions to dawn and to sunset. The Elizabethans never tire of such metaphors: they use the same over and over again. Marlowe speaks of

"The horse that guide the golden eye of heaven,
And blow the morning from their nostrils,
Making their fiery gate above the clouds;"

and Marston of the "dapple grey coursers of the morn," who

"Beat up the light with their bright silver hoofs,
And chase it through the sky."

But the distinctive value of *Tamburlaine* lies in its verse. It is the aim of its verse—an aim not quite attained—which distinguishes it from among the ordinary sensational plays of the time, and which marks Marlowe at once as greater than contemporary dramatists. By the pompous blank verse of *Tamburlaine* Marlowe wished to work a reform: he wished to supersede "the jigging verse of rhyming mother-wits." He makes, indeed, a very conscious effort after dignity of language and "high astounding terms"; but he succeeded better than Lyly had done in his attempt to supersede rhymed verse by "conceited" prose. Marlowe first showed that blank verse had great possibilities: he showed what might be its capacities in the direction of stately march and measure, which should make it harmonious without the technical help of rhyme. In *Tamburlaine* the verse only gives indications of the direction of this reform; it was pompous, stilted, and, as a rule, sense and sound were exaggerated even to rant. When Marlowe became more used to the style he had consciously selected, the effort ceased to be apparent: it became his natural and spontaneous manner. He was thus the founder of a dignified and noble verse; he showed what were the capacities of that ten-syllabled, unrhymed verse which Surrey had first introduced in his translation of Virgil's *Æneid*, which became so splendid in Shakspere's hand, so sweet in the hands of Beaumont and Fletcher; and Marlowe's "mighty line" has become proverbial—it lends itself to the arrogance of Faust:

"Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephistopheles;
By him I'll be great emperor of the world,

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And make a bridge through the moving air
To pass the ocean with a band of men."

It lends itself to the passionate admiration of Faust when the vision of Helen passes before him—

" Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topmost towers of Ilium ?
Sweet Helen ! make me immortal with a kiss.
. . . . . .
Her lips suck forth my soul. See where it flies !
Come, Helen, give me back my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven be in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee
Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sacked ;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest.
Yea, I will wound Achilles on the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
O thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele.
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms,
And none but thou shalt be my paramour."

In the same way that the verse of *Tamburlaine*, though crude and undeveloped, indicates the directions of Marlowe's efforts as to versification, so in *The Jew of Malta* we find indications of Marlowe's efforts in the direction of characterisation. But the task here was more difficult, and Marlowe's failure was correspondingly greater. Marlowe seems to have begun with the idea of making the Jew's character the great point and centre of the piece ; he seems to have conceived it at first as interesting and complex ; to have intended to develop it by the action of the play, and to have failed. So great is the falling off in characterisation after the first and second acts, that it has been suggested that only these were by Marlowe's hand—that the rest of the play was written by some other and inferior dramatist. The most likely theory, however, is that Marlowe set for himself a task too difficult for his yet untried power of characterisation ; that he was struggling, perhaps unconsciously, towards a higher form of art, but that habit and perhaps stress of time checked him, and he fell into the lower and more familiar groove.

Barabbas, the Jew of Malta, is introduced by Machiavelli,

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who is a favourite with many Elizabethan authors, as being a convenient embodiment of fiendish ingenuity: this idea concerning his unmixed wickedness being as common as the equally untrue one which regarded Italy as an absolute den of vice and horror. His presence in this case was meant to show that the Jew was no ordinary villain, but a human being who attained his malicious ends by refined and polished ingenuity. The Jews' ethics are short and simple—the reward of the just and the upright is evidently not found by them in this world—

> "Haply some hapless man hath conscience,
> And for his conscience lives in beggary."

But no such inward obstacle stands in the way of Barabbas' prosperity. An early scene discovers him in his warehouse absorbed in the contemplation of his vast, multifarious wealth; he is scornful of the "paltry silverlings" that the Samnites and the men of Uz have given him in return for his Spanish oils and his wines of Greece—

> "Fie! what a trouble 'tis to count the trash.
> . . . . . .
> Give me the merchants of the Indian mines
> That trade in metal of the purest mould.
> . . . . . .
> Bags of fiery opal, sappires, amethysts,
> Jacinths, hard to pay, grass green emeralds,
> Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
> And seldseen costly stones of so great price
> As one of them indifferently rated,
> And of a carat of this quality,
> May serve in peril of calamity
> To ransom great kings from captivity.
> . . . . . .
> This is the ware wherein consists my wealth,
> And thus methinks should men of judgment frame
> Their means of traffic from the vulgar trade;
> And as their wealth increaseth, so enclose
> Infinite riches in a little room."

The news that his ships have arrived safely increases his self-complacency; he bursts into praises of his race, which has shown itself so capable in acquiring the one good in life. The desire for wealth he considers as a precious and special inheritance of the Jews handed down from Abraham; its increase was the

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blessing promised to them. Herein, he says, was old Abraham's happiness, as it is now the happiness of his race—

> "For who is honor'd now but for his wealth?"

The contempt of the Gentiles, the scattered condition of his race he counts as nothing—

> "Rather had I a Jew be hated thus
> Than pitied in a Christian poverty.
> . . . . .
> They say we are a scattered nation—
> I cannot tell, but we have scrambled up
> More wealth by far than those that brag of faith.
> There's Kirriah Jairim, the great Jew of Greece,
> Obed in Bairseth, Nones in Portugal,
> Myself in Malta, some in Italy,
> Many in France, and wealthy everyone:
> Ay, wealthier far than any Christian.
> I must confess we come not to be kings;
> That's not our fault: alas, our number's few:
> And crowns come either by succession
> Or urged by force: and nothing violent,
> Oft have I heard tell, can be permanent.
> Give us a peaceful rule: make Christians kings
> That thirst so much for principality."

Such are the self-revelations made by Barabbas at the beginning of the play, and much might have been expected from the development of such a character. But this was apparently beyond Marlowe's power. We soon lose interest in Barabbas as a character, and become merely startled by the changing incidents of the play. Barabbas, with the other Jews of Malta, is to pay the tribute demanded by the besieging Turks. He, however, manages to preserve some of his wealth by secreting a hoard in a nunnery, where, for its better protection, his daughter Abigail takes the veil. By the advice of her father before entering the convent she stirs up a quarrel between her lovers, two noblemen of the island. They kill each other, and she, in a fit of remorse, kills herself, after first confessing to a friar. The Jew, afraid that his complicity in fomenting this fatal quarrel may be discovered, asks the friar to whom Abigail has confessed, together with another friar, to his house under pretence of wishing to become a Christian: he manages to kill the friar who had given absolution to his daughter, and to throw suspicion on the other. At last, however, the Jew is betrayed by a slave, Ithamore. By the order of the governor he is thrown over the walls; but even

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this cannot put an end to him—his fall causes him only temporary inconvenience, and he is taken prisoner by the Turks, who are again besieging Malta. He offers, in order to save his life, to be their guide into the fortress; but thinking to better his position, he proposes to the Christians of Malta to deliver the Turks into their hands. They are to be invited to a banquet, and it shall be so arranged that the walls of the banqueting-room shall fall in and crush them. The Christians apparently fall in with his plan, but only in order that they may be at last revenged on the Jew. The Jew himself is the only victim at the banquet. The floor opens, and he is precipitated into a carefully-prepared cauldron of boiling lead below. He disappears with an oath, which, as Mr. Ward says, is a fit conclusion for this drama of which he is the hero. "The whole play," Charles Lamb says, "is one which, a century or two earlier, might have been played before the Londoners by the royal command, when a general pillage and massacre of the Hebrews had been previously resolved on in the Cabinet. . . . The Jew is a mere monster, with a large painted nose, brought in to please the rabble." Thus degenerated Marlowe's first attempt at characterisation. The powerful man of shrewd criminal ingenuity and Machiavellian frankness of the first scene becomes a mere monster, who, if he had possessed one more accomplishment, might have played the part of an ogre in a fairy story. The naïve horrors and exaggerated vicissitudes of the plot connect it with the pre-Shaksperian and unemancipated drama, and show how very far removed is the play from Shakspere's *Merchant of Venice*. Marlowe's play has perhaps had some fictitious interest given to it as being supposed to have influenced Shakspere in his conception and treatment of the character of Shylock. Probably the play suggested to Shakspere the general idea of *The Merchant of Venice*, but the merit lies not so much in the suggestion as in the fact that Shakspere could make so much out of such a bare hint. The comparison of the two plays brings out strong contrasts, showing the infinite superiority of Shakspere's dramatic power. In Shakspere's plays the interest lies greatly, sometimes wholly, in the characters: the interest of the plot is generally subordinate. In *The Merchant of Venice* it consists to a great extent in the characters of Shylock and Portia, in the skilful management of their relations to the other personages of the play, in the gradual working up and complication of these relations, and their disentanglement at the close of the play. In Marlowe's play there is not only deficiency and failure in characterisation—the degeneration of a man into a monster—but

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there is little ingenuity shown in the management of the plot: it consists simply of a sequence of horrors without any inner thread of unity. There are indeed superficial points of resemblance. The elements in the characters of Shylock and Barabbas are the same. "My daughter! oh my ducats! oh my daughter!" cries Shylock. "Oh my girl, my gold, my daughter, my felicity!" says Barabbas at a like crisis, when his fortune and his child disappear together. Both remark on the base uses to which Scripture can be turned. "What! bring you Scripture to confirm your wrongs?" says Barabbas, in the same spirit in which Shylock alludes to the devil who can cite Scripture for his purposes. Avarice, cruelty, cunning, and revengefulness, tempered by a certain amount of dubious paternal fondness, exist alike in the conceptions of both Marlowe and Shakspere; but in Shylock they are combined with infinite delicacy and subtlety, while in Barabbas they are massed together clumsily. Indeed, the human aspect Shakspere has given to his Jew, so different from Marlowe's caricature, has suggested a theory which, though probably unfounded, is yet a great compliment to Shakspere's dramatic powers. It has been thought that in the person and through the mouth of Shylock, Shakspere wished to speak up for the Jews; that he was above the common prejudice of his time, which regarded them as social outcasts of low morality and fiendish cunning. But there is no external evidence, and certainly the play does not afford adequate internal evidence, to prove that Shakspere had more sympathy with the race than Marlowe; but his dramatic genius was such that he could not conceive a character without making him real and living: his conceptions were truthfully related to flesh and blood, and therefore he made Shylock a man, not a monster: he is a heartless man and an avaricious man, but he is human, and as such he has at times his share of human dignity. Shylock is routed in the end, as was Barabbas, and Shylock claimed nothing but what by right of contract he could claim. The moral, if there be any, of both plays is the same—that poetic justice is in the highest sense satisfied when a Gentile outwits a Jew; but that of Shakspere is less crudely put. In connection with *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe's failure in the art of characterisation, ought to be noticed Marlowe's greatest success in this art, the character of Edward II. in the play of that name. Very different is this tragedy to that of the flaunting and bombastic one of *Tamburlaine*. Lamb says: "The reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakspere scarce improved in

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Richard II.;" and indeed it is in this play that Marlowe comes nearest to his great successor. His conception of Edward II.'s character is subtle and complex, yet it has unity: it is well sustained throughout, and the internal struggle—the conflict of various feelings in the mind of the weak but interesting Edward—is depicted with art and with truth. Marlowe's Edward II. is not only a forcible and vigorous creation because it is true to human nature; it is interesting also because it is historically accurate. Shakspere's Richard II. is so very like him that we feel as if Shakspere had been blind to historic truth, blind to the difference in character between Richard II. and Edward II., and had reproduced, with that freshness indeed with which genius imbues all it touches, the Edward II. of Marlowe. The historic Edward II. was actually the weak, extravagant, aimless, pathetic, artistic king that Marlowe makes him in his play; but not so Richard II. Their characters were as different as were the revolutions which followed their depositions. Richard II.'s faults were not those of weakness and thoughtlessness, causing a revolution resulting merely in a change in the person of the monarch—the change from Edward II. to his son Edward III. Richard was extravagant, guilty of favouritism and injustice; but not because he was thoughtless and pleasure-loving, but because he had a distinct political purpose. He wished to establish a great despotism—to be a political tyrant. It was to this end that he overrode the interests of his subjects—that he made all national interests subservient to himself and his needs. But Shakspere's Richard II. is highly organised, sensitive, of foreign tastes, a man who would have been charming in private life, but whose likings and inclinations made him a criminal in the public office in which he was placed. Such a king, according to history, was Edward II., but not so Richard II. Marlowe, then, in his *Edward II.* has the credit of being true not only to the facts, but to the spirit of the past. He produced a character so real and so striking that it stimulated and perhaps controlled too much the conceptions of his great successor. Marlowe's success in the treatment of this character makes one wish that he had found out earlier that the objects most worthy of treatment are the facts and characters of the actual past and present, and not the imaginary characters, horrors, and ecstasies of an artificial world which the youthful dramatic art of his time considered the only fit sphere for artistic talent. Edward II. is no blood-and-thunder character, "desiring all others first to kill, and last of all himself:" "music and poetry are his delights."

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Gaveston calls him the "pliant king." "I must," says Gaveston, wishing to use him for his own ends,

> "Have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
> Musicians that with touching of a string
> May draw the pliant king which way I please."

The favourite who, from no fault of his own, but because he was an alien, was sure to incur the deadly enmity of feudalism, is insolent to the barons already suffering from the royal neglect. He disgusts them with his impudence, his luxury, his foreign ways; his very dress, with its attention to foreign fashions, is an offence to them; he wears

> "A short Italian hooded cloak,
> Larded with pearls, and in his Tuscan cap
> A jewel of more value than the crown."

With the King, says young Mortimer,

> "He laughs from out the window
> At such as we,
> And flouts our train, and jests at our attire."

It is Gaveston who brings on the first crisis of the play; always it is the King's favourites who, by their injudiciousness and insolence, cause those vicissitudes of the royal fortune which give to Edward II. so many opportunities of indulging in picturesque situations. In a tone to which the mighty line of Marlowe, somewhat chastened by the self-control of maturer art, lends itself well, the barons threaten the King—

> "My lord, the family of the Mortimers
> Are not so poor, but would they sell their land
> Could levy men enough to anger you.
> We never beg, but use such prayers as these."

These warriors, "stern of mood," angry with their pleasure-loving, Celtic-natured King, taunt him with his neglect of what to them was the most solemn duty, the highest function of a king. He has never been in the field but once—

> "And then thy soldiers marched like players,
> With garish robes, not armour: and thou thyself
> Bedaub'd with gold, rode laughing at the rest,
> Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest,
> Where women's favors hung like labels down."

Edward II. may not have much sense of the duties or practi-

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cal dignity of a king, but in theory he has a high idea of its elevation and dignity. It was to him something great, mysterious, and intangible, that nothing could destroy. He might have spoken the same words that Shakspere put into the mouth of his descendant, Richard II.—

> "Not all the water in the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm off from an anointed king."

In all things, says Edward II., they are different to private men—

> "The forest deer, being struck,
> Runs to a herb that closeth up the wounds;
> But when the imperial lion's flesh is gored
> He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
> And highly scorning that the lowly earth
> Should drink his blood, mounts up to the air:
> And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
> The ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb."

In a tone which has the exaltation befitting the delegate of God, insulted by a faithless queen and a presumptuous baron, and which yet at the same time betrays the half-conscious weakness of the man, he exclaims—

> "Full oft am I soaring up to high heaven,
> To plain me to the gods against them both;
> But when I call to mind I am a king,
> Methinks I should revenge me of the wrongs
> That Isabel and Mortimer have done."

With all his sense of fine situations and the necessity of acting up to them, he is often childishly querulous and petulant.

"Tell me," he exclaims, when it is made obvious to him that his deposition is desired,

> "Must I now resign my crown
> To make usurping Mortimer a king?"

And at a later stage in the tragedy, when the baron's commands are imperious, and he is ordered to prison: "Must," he says—

> "'Tis somewhat hard when kings must go."

At other times he makes an attempt to infuse dignity into the situation: he bows his kingly head to what he assumes, for the purposes of effect, to be a heaven-sent fate—

> "But what the heavens appoint I must obey:
> Here, take my crown: the life of Edward too . . .

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But stay awhile, let me be king till night,
That I may gaze upon this glittering crown;
So shall mine eyes receive their last content . . .
Heaven and earth conspire
To make me miserable, here receive my crown—
Receive it! no, these innocent hands of mine
Shall not be guilty of so foul a crime."

And thinking that he perceives signs of sympathy in his audience he turns to them—

". . . What, are you mov'd? pity you me?
Then send for unrelenting Mortimer
And Isabel, whose eyes, being turned to steel,
Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear. . . ."

In the last scene, when confronted with death in the dungeon of Berkeley Castle, his self-consciousness and vanity leave him—

"Now sweet God of Heaven,"

he cries, when left alone with the murderers,

"Make me despise this transitory pomp,
And sit for ever enthronized in heaven;
Come, Death, and with thy fingers close mine eyes,
Or if I live let me forget myself."

Edward II., with his mixture of dignity, sometimes real, sometimes merely pompous and self-conscious, with the weakness and pathos of an insulted and cruelly-wronged man, is a character that does credit to Marlowe, as showing that he could conceive that highest of all dramatic creations, a complex human character. The course of the play too shows that he could preserve its unity, for Edward II. is a real human being, not a mere bundle of inconsistencies: the contradictions in his character are the contradictions that would exist in a nature moulded as his was.

Edward II.'s soaring and groundless dignity is only another side to his uncontrolled misery and weakness. His apparent cruelty and disregard of his subjects was the result not of deliberate tyranny, but only of his absorbing affection for his friends—for those men of foreign blood whose natures were akin to his (for Edward had his mother's tastes and inclinations: he was English only in name), whose very presence in England was an insult to his baronage.

"My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers,

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And with the noise tears up my giddy brain,
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.
Ah, had some bloodless fury rose from hell,
And with my kingly sceptre struck me dead,
When I was forced to leave my Gaveston.
. . . . .
Let Pluto's bells ring out my fatal knell,
And hags howl for my death at Charon's shore,
For friend hath Edward none but these, and these
Must die under a tyrant's sword.
. . . .
Life, farewell with my friends."

When they are gone it seems to him for a moment that his life, even with its remains of royal pomp, is worthless. "Father," he says, to the monk who comes to give him religious consolation, "the life contemplative is heaven."

"Good Father, on thy lap
Lay I this head, laden with mickle care.
O might I never ope these eyes again,
Never again lift up this drooping head,
O never more lift up this dying heart."

The death scene of Marlowe's king," says Charles Lamb, "moves pity and terror beyond any scene, modern or ancient, with which I am acquainted." In the dungeon of Berkeley Castle the King is left alone with those whom he sees have come to murder him.

"These looks of thine can harbour naught but death;
I see my tragedy written on thy brows.
Yet stay awhile, forbear thy bloody hand,
And let me see the stroke before it comes,
That even then, when I shall lose my life,
My mind may be more steadfast on my God.
. . . . .
O if thou harbour'st murder in thy heart,
Let this gift change thy mind and save thy soul!
Know that I am a king: O, at that name
I feel a hell of grief. Where is my crown?
Gone, gone, and do I still remain alive?

Light. You're overwatched, my lord: lie down and rest.

Ed. But that grief keeps me waking, I should sleep;
For not these ten days have these eyelids closed;
Now as I speak they fall, and yet with fear
Open again. O wherefore sittst thou here?

Light. If you mistrust me, I'll be gone, my lord.

Ed. No, no; for, if thou meanst to murder me,
Thou wilt return again; and therefore stay.

Light. He sleeps.

Ed. O let me not die: yet stay, O stay awhile.

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Light. How now, my lord?
Ed. Something still buzzeth in my ears,
And tells me if I sleep I never wake;
This fear is that which makes me tremble most,
And therefore tell me, wherefore art thou come?
Light. To rid thee of thy life. Matrevis, come.
Ed. I am too weak and feeble to resist:
Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul."

But the play of *Edward II.*, with its skilful treatment of character,—with its fine verse, which shows, as Mommsen says, "that Marlowe could sometimes attain a facility of blank verse quite equal to that of Shakspere in his earlier works,"—was not by Marlowe's contemporaries and immediate successors considered as his greatest success. It required the perceptive genius of Shakspere to appreciate fully a play which, in its conception and treatment of character, was far beyond the dramatic understanding of the age. *The Massacre of Paris* is the very worst of Marlowe's plays; but it was popular at the time, both because it dealt with horrors, and because those horrors were recent. *Dido of Carthage*, a play also popular with the age, in which he is said to have been helped by Nash, cannot be said to hold a high place in dramatic literature; "it is a very beautiful version of the well-known tale of Dido's love for Æneas," says Mr. Ward; "but more a dramatic poem than a play." Philips said that of all Marlowe had written for the stage, "*Dr. Faustus* made the greatest noise, with its devils and such like tragical sport." The age required "tragical sport," and devils who attended the human soul and eventually dragged it to hell were better even than massacre and bloodshed. The deep significance of the mediæval legend of *Faust*, and the still more profound meaning that has been given to it by Goethe, made a posterity, not so anxious for sensational interest as Marlowe's contemporaries, very critical of an artist who deals with this subject.

But no inner meaning in the legend was observable to Marlowe; not even a German critic could evolve a moral lesson or discover an attempt at the solution of a moral problem in the play of Marlowe. It is simply the bare story that Marlowe has taken and dramatised, and he has not done even that very well; there is no characterisation in the play. Faust, Wagner, even Mephistopheles, attract little personal interest. The dramatic points are in the situations necessarily implied by the story, and even the thread which binds these situations together, which should make the unity of the plot, is loose and superficial. Some of the scenes could be omitted altogether, as, for instance, the

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scene with the horse-courser, who pulls off Faustus' leg, to his great astonishment; the scene where Faust and Mephistopheles preside over the banquet of the Pope with the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Friars. The stage direction at the end of this scene,—"The Pope crosseth himself again, and Faustus hits him a box on the ear, and they all run away,"—sufficiently shows that this and the like scenes were introduced for the benefit of that part of the audience now technically known as the pit, and were attempts at that comedy of incident which every dramatic author of that day thought himself obliged to introduce in order to enliven tragedy. The play opens with the scene of Faust in his study, soliloquising, like his more classic namesake, on the futility of all branches of human study. Logic and economy, physic, law, divinity, cannot satisfy him; but it is not because, like Goethe's Faust, he has a soul which cannot be satisfied with anything but life itself and its experiences: it is because he has the comparatively vulgar desire to be omnipotent:—

> "These metaphysics of magicians
> And necromantic books are heavenly;
> Lines, circles, letters, characters;
> Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
> O what a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of horror, and omnipotence,
> Is promis'd to the studious artizan!
> All things that move between the quiet poles
> Shall be at my command: emperors and kings
> Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
> Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds:
> But his dominion that exceeds in this
> Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man:
> A sound magician is a Demi God."

Then Faustus, having in thought aspired to know the secrets of the divinity, takes what Mephistopheles calls the shortest cut, abjures the Trinity, and prays devoutly to the Prince of Hell. "For," says Mephistopheles,

> "when we hear one rack the name of God,
> Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,
> We fly, in hope to get his glorious soul."

Concerning Faustus' soul Mephistopheles has no difficulty—

> "The word damnation terrifies not him,
> For he confounds hell in Elysium."

"Go," he says to Mephistopheles—

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"bear these tidings to great Lucifer:
Seeing Faustus has incurred eternal death
By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity,
Say, he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four-and-twenty years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness:
Having thee ever to attend on me,
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand,
To slay mine enemies, and to aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will."

Mephistopheles, then, by the arts of magic, by the help of the powers of evil, *i.e.* of the fallen angels, who are always seeking their revenge in the upsetting of God's laws, obtains for Faust all that he desires for the space of four-and-twenty years. Apparently the wishes of his soul are to a certain extent satisfied when he can play practical jokes on the Pope and a horse-courser. Marlowe introduces none of the purely human interest that consists in a love episode such as that of Goethe's Marguerite and Faust. Mephistopheles summons for Faust the vision of Helen, the embodiment of all beauty, and Faust addresses to her those celebrated lines which mark the height of Marlowe's powers of artistic expression in verse of a sensuous kind. The want of personal human interest in the story lowers to a considerable extent the value of the play; and as Marlowe tells it, there is a want of point in the narrative and its close. Faust's tragic end appears unmerited: we do not realise what constitutes the enormity of his offence: he does not seem to us to have done much wrong: he is not like the Faust of Goethe, who, in willing companionship with Mephistopheles, has poisoned for himself and for others the best and purest things in human life. We feel that the hell of this man's remorse, in its depth and in its powerlessness, is but the fit torment for a soul that has made such a wreck of life for others as well as for himself. But it is otherwise with Marlowe's *Faustus*. The play is not lit up with any spiritual or theological significance, which would have given a deeper and more terrible meaning to the last scene. We know that Marlowe had no religious or spiritual belief which could have illumined for him this legend, and which would have enabled him to render it to us more solemnly and with more dignity. The last scene is, however, impressive: it is tragic with the powerless struggle of Faust to evade his certain and quickly-arriving end—with the passionate cries of one doomed who can look nowhere for help.

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"*Faust.* Ah, Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!
Stand still, you ever moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come;
Fair Nature's Eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul.
O lente, lente currite, noctis equi!
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
O, I'll leap up to my God!—Who pulls me down?—
See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop: Ah, my Christ,
Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ;
Yet I will call on him: O spare me, Lucifer!—
Where is it now? 'tis gone: and see where God
Stretcheth out his arm and bends his ireful brows!
Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
No, no. Then will I headlong run into the earth:
Earth gape! O no, it will not harbour me!
Yon stars that reigned at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist,
Into the entrails of yon laboring cloud,
That when you vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths;
So that my soul may but ascend to heaven!
(*The clock strikes the half-hour.*)
Ah! half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon.
O God,
If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
Yet for Christ's sake, whose blood has ransomed me,
Impose some end to my incessant pain;
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
A hundred thousand, and at last be saved!
No end is limited to damnèd souls.
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
Ah! Pythagoras' metempsychosis, were that true,
This soul should fly from me, and I be chang'd
Unto some brutish beast. All beasts are happy,
For, when they die,
Their souls are soon dissolv'd in elements:
But mine must live still to be plagued in hell.
Curs'd be the parents that engendered me.
No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer,
That hath depriv'd thee of the joys of heaven.
(*The clock striketh twelve.*)
O, it strikes, it strikes! Now body, turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.
(*Thunder and lightning.*)

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O soul, be chang'd into small water drops,
And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found!

Enter DEVILS.

My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile.
Ugly hell, gape not!—Come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books.—Ah Mephistopheles!
[*Exeunt* DEVILS *with* FAUST."

The chorus at the close of the tragedy in neat and polished lines draws attention to its moral, an office which justifies to a certain extent their existence, so much has this moral been obscured and overlooked in the course of the play—

"Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And buried is Apollo's laurel-bough,
That sometime grew within this learnèd man.
Faustus is gone: regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise,
Only to wonder at unlawful things,
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
To practice more than heavenly power permits."

"The services of Marlowe to dramatic literature," says Mr. Ward, "are twofold. As the author who first introduced blank verse to the popular stage, he rendered to our drama a service which it would be difficult to over-estimate. No innovation could have done more to preserve it from the danger of artificiality of form, which so readily leads to artificiality of matter, to which the drama is at all times peculiarly exposed. . . . His second service to the progress of our dramatic literature, though not perhaps admitting of so precise a statement, is even more important than the other . . . it was he and no other who first inspired with true poetic passion the form of literature to which his chief efforts were consecrated. After Marlowe had written it was impossible for our dramatists to return to the cold horrors or tame declamation of the earlier tragic drama: the *Spanish Tragedy* and *Gorboduc* had alike been left behind. 'His raptures were all air and fire:' and it is this gift of passion which, together with his services to the outward form of the English drama, makes Marlowe worthy to be called not a predecessor, but the earliest in the immortal company of our great dramatists."

Mr. Ward denies almost entirely to Marlowe "the divine gift of humour, which lies so close to that of pathos." But

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pathos, tenderness, and passion no one can deny to him, and he has at times an insight into human nature which gives him possession of the true gift of characterisation, making him see that the real tragedy of human life lies not in the struggle of the human nature against the powers of nature, but in the struggle between the nature and the will of the human being. In *Faust* the human episode exhibited nothing but the struggle of the human power against Destiny; but in *Edward II.* he gives us that higher interest which consists in following the struggle of the inward life of a complex human soul. He was the first, as Mr. J. A. Symonds says, to design tragedy on a grand scale. Even in less creditable plays, where character was not a study but merely a creation, he showed himself infinitely superior to preceding and contemporary dramatists. "Before Marlowe plays had been pageants and shows. He first produced dramas. Before Marlowe it appeared seriously doubtful whether the rules and precedents of classic authors might not determine the style of dramatic composition in England as in France: after him it was impossible for a dramatist to please the people by any play which had not in it some portion of the pith of the characters created by Marlowe."

Marlowe was thus fit to be the immediate predecessor of Shakspere. If Shakspere's career had been cut short as early as was that of Marlowe's, there would have been a very little gap between these two great artists. As it was, Shakspere lived to mature and to dignify by self-control powers which Marlowe was squandering and wasting by a wild and purposeless Bohemian life, which could recommend itself only to his lower nature. All those powers which we see in the germ in Marlowe's plays are seen developed and intensified in the works of Shakspere's later and middle life. Marlowe is eloquent, and his blank verse is powerful, but no passage of his comes up to the stately and prophetic warning of the Bishop of Carlisle, on the occasion of the deposition of Richard II.—

> "My Lord of Hereford here, whom you call king,
> Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford's king:
> And if you crown him, let me prophesy:
> The blood of English shall manure the ground,
> And future ages groan for this foul act;
> Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
> And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
> Shall kin with kin, and kind with kind confound:
> Disorder, horror, fear, and mutiny
> Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd

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> The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.
> O, if you raise this house against this house,
> It will the wofullest division prove
> That ever fell upon this cursed earth.
> Prevent, resist it, let it not be so,
> Lest child, child's children, cry against you 'woe!'"

Shakspere had outlived the bombast which generally mingled with the stately lines of the more youthful Marlowe.

Marlowe is passionate, and can enter into the world of feeling, but Shakspere excels him in the conceptions of the youthful passions of Romeo and Juliet, and of the deeper and more intense feelings of Othello and Desdemona. Marlowe had a keen sense of the pathos in life, but he could not have conceived the intense and long drawn-out pathos of Hamlet's love, wrecked by the purpose that life had thrust upon him. "I lov'd Ophelia," says Hamlet, as he leaps into her grave: "forty thousand brothers could not, with all their quantity of love, make up my sum."

He could not have conceived the grief of Brutus, so quiet in its depth and intensity, who replies to Cassius taunting him with the futility of his philosophy—"No man bears sorrow better. Portia is dead." It was Shakspere's sense of those deeper currents of life which stir the surface of things but little, that gave him his pre-eminence in the power of characterisation. Marlowe might have conceived, but he could never have sustained, characters like those of Brutus, of Macbeth, of Hamlet, where "the soul's tragedy" makes the point and interest of the play. And immeasurably superior as Shakspere was in this, the highest branch of dramatic power, he was no less superior in the minor and yet essential attributes of a dramatist. The *Merchant of Venice* is only one example among many others of a plot cleverly constructed and developed, with its different threads of story running side by side, and then all drawn together towards the end. Almost all Shakspere's plays are examples of that instinctive and technical knowledge of what constitutes an effective *mise-en-scène*—knowledge which can only come naturally to an actor. And then, above all, in addition to those powers which he possessed in common with Marlowe, only heightened and intensified by a life full of experience both of the stage and of the world, Shakspere possessed the capacity for humour—that capacity which serves to harmonise the incongruities and the trivialities of the world. "It is a presence and pervading influence throughout his most

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earnest creations. This it is which preserves Shakspere from all eager and shrill intensity: this it is which makes his emotions voluminous and massive." It is this which helped him to be so thorough and so sympathetic in his knowledge and his feeling for the people in the world; it helped him to understand and to sympathise with those things which, to souls that are always high pitched, seem trivial and obscure.

In speaking of Shakspere from the point of view of the history of dramatic literature, we are tempted to indulge in a verbal roar of admiration when the great gap between him and the dramatists of his age becomes evident. How great this gap is, is only too evident to those who make a study of the dramatic literature of the Elizabethan period. As Shakspere is superior to Marlowe in feeling, in thought, in characterisation, in knowledge of what makes a plot and effective *mise-en-scène*, so is he superior to his many and justly-celebrated successors. Shakspere can dramatise a story as effectively as Beaumont and Fletcher; he can write lyrics as charming and as musical as those of Fletcher; as the songs in *As You Like It*, in *Cymbeline*, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, amply show; he can conceive the spirit of history, and can take us back to the past in a different but certainly in as true and effective a manner as Chapman; as the Roman and English historical plays sufficiently show; he has as high an idea of his art, and as much instinctive moral purpose, as the excellent Ben Jonson; though happily his genius could recognise no reason why it should pose as the teacher of its age. It seems almost impossible to speak of Shakspere without unconsciously depreciating the work of the dramatists of his age. In one or more points some of them approached very near to him; but the important fact to notice is, that from the point of view of what constitutes the ideal drama, Shakspere in his work, taking it all together, was as much superior to them as it is probable that he was in his personality and his life.

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CHAPTER IX.

SHAKSPERE.

Born at Stratford-on-Avon, April 1564; educated at the Free Grammar School, Stratford; married November 1582; well known as a dramatist in London in 1592; returns to Stratford between 1610-1612; died April 1616.

Plays which Shakspere wrote with others.

Titus Andronicus, 1585-90; 1 *Henry VI.*, 1590-91; *Two Noble Kinsmen*, 1612; *Henry VIII.*, 1612-13.

Comedies.

Love's Labour Lost, 1590; *Comedy of Errors*, 1591; *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 1592-93; *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1593-94; *Merchant of Venice*, 1596; *Taming of the Shrew*, 1597 (?); *Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1598 (?); *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1598; *As You Like It*, 1599; *Twelfth Night*, 1600-1; *All's Well that Ends Well*, 1601-2 (?); *Measure for Measure*, 1603; *Troilus and Cressida*, 1603 (?); *revised*, 1607.

Historical Plays.

2 and 3 *Henry VI.*, 1591-92; *Richard III.*, 1593; *Richard II.*, 1594; *King John*, 1595; 1 and 2 *Henry IV.*, 1597-98; *Henry V.*, 1599.

Tragedies.

Romeo and Juliet, two dates, 1591, 1597 (?); *Julius Cæsar*, 1601; *Hamlet*, 1602; *Othello*, 1604; *King Lear*, 1605; *Macbeth*, 1606; *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1607; *Coriolanus*, 1608; *Timon*, 1607-8.

Romances.

Pericles, 1608; *Cymbeline*, 1609; *Tempest*, 1610; *Winter's Tale*, 1610-11.

"All that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakspere," says Steevens, "is that he was born upon Stratford-on-Avon, married and had children there; went to London, where he commenced acting and wrote poems and plays; returned

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to Stratford, made his will, died and was buried." The small external evidence that is possessed concerning the facts of Shakspere's life has driven industrious commentators to purely internal evidences for the construction of theories concerning his life, his employment, and his character. The knowledge that he shows in his plays of legal technicalities stamps him, according to some commentators, among whom is Collier, as having been a lawyer, or at least apprenticed to an attorney; Aubrey thinks he was possibly an usher at Stratford Grammar School; Mr. Roach Smith has written a book on "the rural life of Shakspere," tending to show that Shakspere was a farmer; Mr. Thoms inclines to think that Shakspere had experience as a soldier; Dr. Farmer, encouraged by the two lines in Hamlet,—

> "There's a divinity which shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them as we will"—

thinks that probably Shakspere may have been a wool-stapler, the last line containing an allusion to the ordinary practice in the making of skewers used in this trade; another commentator thinks that he was a butcher; another inclines to believe that he may have been a surgeon; lastly, Mr. Grant White undertakes to prove on the same sort of evidence that Shakspere was a tailor, and thus consciously and ingeniously points the moral to be gathered from these sort of investigations, viz.—that with reference to the actual practical life of a man, so many-sided emotionally and intellectually as Shakspere, with such a knowledge of practical life and practical men, and at the same time such a consummate dramatist, nothing can be satisfactorily determined save on trustworthy external evidence.

Of this, unfortunately, there is very little. Shakspere was born at Stratford in 1564. He was baptized on the 26th of April of that year, but the date of his birth, which is generally assumed to be the 23d, the same day of the month as that of his death, it is impossible to fix accurately. His father was a wealthy citizen of Stratford, probably a glover by trade, occupying the posts of bailiff, alderman, and magistrate, and connected by marriage with the Ardens, a family belonging to the smaller gentry of the county; and at the Free Grammar School at Stratford Shakspere learnt his "little Latin and less Greek." Then, from the time of his leaving school till 1592, there are very few facts concerning him which can be regarded as definitely established. One is his marriage in 1582 to Anne Hathaway, a woman much older than himself, with whom it is the general

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impression that he was not happy. It is supposed that two lines in *Twelfth Night*, Act ii. Scene 4, are the outcome of his unhappy experience—

> "Let still the woman take,
> An elder than herself."

He had three children born,—the first in 1583, the two second in 1585. It is this large space of time for which so many theories have been invented to fill. His father lost money: it was then that he is supposed to have taken to a trade. Rowe has a story, grounded on doubtful and traditional authority, that Shakspere had to leave Stratford because he was concerned in deer-stealing, and had incurred the enmity of Sir Thomas Lucy, the owner of property near Stratford. Equally doubtful is Davenant's story that Shakspere supported himself when he first went to London by holding horses at the theatre door. It is much more likely, however, not that Shakspere fled from Stratford in disgrace, and sought London as a place of refuge; but that, stimulated by seeing the Queen's Players, who came to Stratford in 1587, he made up his mind to seek his fortune among the dramatists in London. There was probably a splendid opening at that time for a clever and quick writer and adapter of plays. The managers of theatres did not like one play to run for more than seventeen days, and thus they must always have in their employment men who, even if they could not write new plays, were at least skilful in revising or adapting old ones. "As a theatrical adapter," says Mr. Ward, "Shakspere taught himself the secrets of his craft;" and his skill and his success in this line have abundant testimony given to them in 1592, by the attack made on him in the *Groatsworth of Wit* by Greene, who, in calling him "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers," hints that he was unscrupulous in seizing on materials belonging to other dramatists. It is impossible to determine how far it was then considered honourable to borrow or adapt the plays of others; but that Shakspere did not err on this point, as a general rule, is amply corroborated later by Chettle, who speaks enthusiastically of his "upright dealing."

To M. Taine's great astonishment Shakspere became respectable, *i.e.* he raised himself above the wild Bohemian life into which the dramatists of that time plunged, and in which for the most part they remained till the day of their death. In 1597 Shakspere bought a house in his native town: in 1597-98 three Stratford documents, which have been preserved, show him

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to have been engaged in pecuniary transactions which showed him to be a rich man: in 1608, on three occasions, he purchased more property; and in 1605 he makes his last and largest purchase. But although his home was at Stratford his active life was in London. According to a tradition,[1] Shakspere, by the means of his patron, Lord Southampton, contributed a very large sum towards the building of the Globe Theatre, which was erected, after the death of their father in 1594, by the sons of James Burbadge, a fellow-actor of Shakspere's. Another and perhaps more trustworthy theory, grounded on a document discovered by Mr. Halliwell, states that the brothers Burbadge built the theatre at their own expense, and "to themselves joyned those deserving men, Shakspere, Heming, Condell, Philips and others, partners in the profits of that they call the house." However it may be, whether it resulted from his skill as a man of business, actor, or dramatist, Shakspere's life had success from a purely pecuniary point of view. How far he was popular as an actor cannot quite be estimated. The ordinary assumption now is that he was a bad actor, but there is little foundation for this view. In 1680 Aubrey recorded that he "acted exceedingly well:" and the statement of the author of *Historia Histrionica*, 1699, "that he was a much better poet than player," or the statement of Rowe that he distinguished himself "if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer," are by no means decisive proofs that his acting powers were mediocre. Chettle, in 1598, in *Kind Hart's Dreme*, referring to him in his capacity of actor, praises him as "excellent in the qualitie he professes." He was mentioned among the principal tragedians acting in *Sejanus*, and as one of the principal comedians acting in *Every Man in his Humour*. Certainly when he wrote *Hamlet* he had acquired a very fine and just critical estimate of what acting should be. As an author he had probably suffered from actors who belonged to Marlowe's school of tragedy: "If you mouth it, as so many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hands, but use all gently: for in the very torrent and tempest of your passion you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness." But certainly only Shakspere's plays would require smoothness and temperance in the acting. The tragedies of the pre-Shaksperian school, the tragedies of Marlowe and of Kyd, would require no such self-control on the part of the actor. Bloody, sensational, and unnaturally horrible in plot and language, they would need

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actors who could rant and fume across the stage. The "high astounding terms" of Marlowe, the speeches of the terrible Tamburlaine, could be rendered by no actor who could not fearlessly and without any regard for the control that art demands, "bombast out a blank verse." For as Shakspere was the first to introduce a deeper meaning into the drama —to make the interest of a play depend not so much on the change of incident and situation as on the deeper but quieter currents of feeling and thought which stir the surface comparatively slightly—so he would require a new standard for acting, the temperance and "self-control" of strong but complex natures, which "in the very whirlwind of passion acquire and beget a temperance" that gives dignity to the character and smoothness to the action. Probably, therefore, Shakspere's acting, if it was equal to his critical standard, would not be highly appreciated by his boisterous age, any more than the deeper meaning of his plays was understood.

It seems almost certain that Shakspere's popularity in his time was due to qualities which are not those for which we principally value him. His contemporaries admired his capacity for smooth and elegant versification. Chettle and Heywood spoke of "the facetious grace of silver-tongued Melicent . . . the enchanting art of mellifluous Shakspere." Webster, in 1612, praising him because of his "right happy and copious industry," places him with Heywood and Dekker. Greene liked *Hamlet* because of its tragical speeches: his best plays were probably popular because of the murders and tragedies they included. Ben Jonson was the only one of his professional contemporaries who realised at all that the genius of Shakspere was something rare and great. In those verses which pay a tribute to Shakspere's art, Ben Jonson shows how ready he who had "subjected himself to the most conscientious training undergone by any Elizabethan dramatist was to acknowledge the less painfully achieved greatness of his friend."

It is not surprising, therefore, that in his old age, between 1610 and 1611, Shakspere retired to Stratford. Although the little town was now Puritanically inclined, and had requested the "players" not to perform there, it must have afforded as congenial surroundings to Shakspere in his old age as the society of dramatists who led the ordinary Bohemian life, and valued him merely for his "facetious grace" and "copious industry." That he was thoroughly isolated from the narrow life around him—that he had as much imaginative freedom in

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puritanic Stratford as he had in the wider yet more thoughtless life of London—is shown by *The Tempest*, which he wrote in 1610. Six years afterwards he died. "There is nothing," says Mr. Ward, "in what we know of the life of Shakspere to interfere with the noblest conception we may be able to form of his personal character and his conduct." "Was it," M. Taine suggests, "that by the mere force of his overflowing imagination he escaped, like Goethe, the perils of an overflowing imagination; that in depicting passion he succeeded, like Goethe, in quelling passion in his own case; that the lava did not break out in his conduct, because it found issue in his poetry; that his theatre redeemed his life; and that having passed by sympathy through every kind of folly and wretchedness that is incident to human existence, he was able to settle down amidst them with a calm and melancholy smile, listening for distraction to the aerial music of the fancies in which he revelled."

All that we can conclude with regard to him is that he must have had a great, strong, and magnanimous personality. In his interest in life, and in his sympathy with all that was human, we find no trace of the bitterness of disappointed egoism. It was not

> "the dread of something after death,
> The undiscovered country,"

which made him cling to existence, facing its "sea of troubles;" it was rather because through his life ran the current of that strong and tender feeling which closes in his sonnet, those lines of weariness and despair—

> "Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
> As to behold desert a beggar born,
> And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
> And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
> And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
> And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
> And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
> And strength by limping sway disabled,
> And art made tongue-tied by authority,
> And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,
> And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
> And captive good attending captive ill:
> Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
> Save that, to die, I leave my love alone."

"His fame was left the sport of circumstances: his monument is in his works alone." From the Restoration to the rise

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of German criticism Shakspere's fame was undoubted; but his works were subjected to much criticism, sometimes of a very unappreciative and unintelligent nature. At the time of the Restoration there was indeed Milton to speak for

"Sweetest Shakspere, Fancy's child;"

but the popular estimate of Shakspere by this age, whose taste was frivolous and foreign, is well illustrated by passages in the diary of Pepys, who deserves some notice as a typical critic of this time —"his nature," as he says, "being most earnest in books of pleasure as plays." He thought *Macbeth* "a pretty good play," and "a most excellent play for variety:" he was "mightly pleased" with *Hamlet*, but he considered the *Midsummer Night's Dream* the most insipid ridiculous play he ever saw in his life. So, too, with the *Merry Wives of Windsor;* it did not please him at all: "no part of it." Dryden applied arbitrary canons to Shakspere, and thus found him wanting, though he was not so overwhelmed by eighteenth-century fashion as to condemn him as utterly barbarous. To a certain extent Dryden had a sincere admiration for Shakspere: he was not hopelessly crippled, as were other critics of this age, among whom was Rymer, by abject reverence for Aristotelian rules. But it was not till the reign of Queen Anne, the so-called Augustan age of English literature, that Shakspere's literary fame was firmly established. In 1709 was published the first octavo edition of Shakspere by Rowe; then came Pope's edition in 1725. Then about 1765 Dr. Johnson came forward as a critic of Shakspere; and though under the influence of the Augustan age—though he could not conceive of a poet greater than Pope—"though," as Mr. Ward says, "he thought a merely neutral-tinted passage of Congreve's superior to anything that Shakspere had ever written,"—he yet, to a certain extent, anticipated the criticism of Lessing. "Whether Shakspere knew the unities and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to enquire. We may reasonably suppose that when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and critics, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it to be lamented that they were not known to him or not observed; nor if such

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another poet should arise should I very vehemently reproach him that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus."

But it was not till 1767-69, when Lessing, in his *Hamburger Dramaturgie*, laid down the laws of true dramatic criticism, subsequently followed by Coleridge in 1811 in his lectures on Shakspere, that the true literary position of Shakspere could be estimated and established. He once and for all vindicated the right of a true poet to emancipate himself from all rules. "The artist of genius contains in himself the test of all rules, and only understands, retains, and follows those among them which express his feeling in words. In other words, as genius varies, so the application of rules must be varied: and it is only by an endeavour to understand the intellectual life and development of a great artist that the critic can vindicate his right to be heard as a guide." He combated the idea, to which the French school, led by Voltaire, clung so firmly, that the idea of the drama is to enforce a moral. "The tragic poet makes use of a story not because it has happened, but because it has happened after such a fashion that he could with difficulty invent a better for his present purpose. If he by accident finds this fittingness in a real event, he welcomes that real event: but to burrow among history books for the purpose is not worth his while. . . . On the stage we have to learn not what this or that man actually did, but what any and every man of a certain character would have done under certain given circumstances."

Inquiry starting from this basis, the sympathetic and artistic criticism of him by men who were artists themselves, such as Coleridge and Charles Lamb,—the thorough and detailed examination of his works by critics of that school who aim both at acquiring a knowledge of the mind of the author, as well as obtaining a more sympathetic and intelligent basis for admiration of the works themselves,—has resulted in the establishment of Shakspere's fame as the greatest dramatic artist that the modern world has yet produced. This sort of criticism has also put an end to that detailed and scholastic method of inquiry which consisted in treating the works of Shakspere as the Schoolmen treated the Bible, examining and quibbling and building theories on isolated passages, viewing them with no reference to the context or to their connection with the whole. The spirit of Shakspere could no more be discovered by this method than could the spirit of Christianity.

In noticing his numerous plays, so varied in their excellence, it is only possible to be brief by taking into account one of the

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qualities of Shakspere as a dramatist, and that his most distinctive one, and the one which enabled him to make such an epoch in the history of the drama, supplying so splendidly what hitherto it had lacked. Mr. Ward says: "It was neither in diction and versification nor in construction that the progress of the English drama owed most to Shakspere. A single word must express its greatest debt to him and his greatest gift as a dramatist. This word is characterisation. It was in the drawing of characters—which range over almost every type of humanity, furnishing a fit subject for the tragic or the comic art—that he surpassed all his predecessors, and has never been approached by any of his competitors in any branch of the drama illustrated by his genius. . . . The characters of Shakspere are the ideals of this aspect of the dramatic art: and his power of characterisation was to him a gift like the gift of Hephæstus to Achilles—it made him not only the foremost among the Danai, but the one invincible among them." It is only by studying in his plays the development of this power that it is possible to estimate his true greatness and to assign him his true position in the history of the English drama.

In proportion as Shakspere grew older and his experiences and his interest in and insight into life increased, his power and range of characterisation grew also. Between 1601 and 1610, only a few years before his death, he wrote his best plays,—those in which he shows the greatest grasp, not only of the stage part of his business, not only the greatest power of expression, but also the highest power of conceiving and developing character. *Julius Cæsar* was written in 1601, *Hamlet* in 1602, *Macbeth* in 1606. These plays are the outcome of the deepest and most intense period of his development, when his imagination, deepened by personal experience of life, disciplined by the study of historical facts, conceived with intensity and truth the tragic personalities and inward struggles of Brutus, Hamlet, and Macbeth.

But before he attained to the full exercise of his powers, either in tragedy or comedy, a long period was spent in learning the technicalities of his profession, and in understanding how to treat and to develop the material of the drama. From 1588, the time when his dramatic career may be supposed to begin, till about 1593, he may be said to be acquiring the elements of his art. Two plays are edited with the rest of Shakspere's which belong to this first period in his dramatic career. These two plays are *Titus Andronicus* and the first part of *Henry VI.* The plot of *Titus Andronicus* consists of horrors on a grand and

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Marlowesque scale. It is a type of the ordinary sensational drama, against which Shakspere afterwards struggled instinctively and unconsciously, as Ben Jonson did consciously and sententiously. "It is a tragedy of horror," says Gerald Massey, . . . "it reeks of blood, it smells of blood; we almost feel that we have handled blood—it is so gross. The mental stain is not whitened by Shakspere's sweet springs of pity; the horror is not hallowed by that appalling sublimity with which he invests his chosen ministers of death. It is tragedy only in the coarsest material relationships." Prof. Dowden says: "Notwithstanding strong external evidence,—the testimony of Meres, and the fact that Heming and Condell included the play in the first folio,—it is difficult to admit *Titus Andronicus*. . . . If any portions of it be from Shakspere's hand, it has at least this interest—it shows that there was a period of Shakspere's authorship when the poet had not yet discovered himself, a period when he yielded to the popular influences of the day and the hour; this much interest and no more." So too with the first part of *Henry VI.* The plot offered opportunities for deeper interest, which Shakspere later in life would have turned to some account. The interest which might have been given by the clever management of the character of Joan of Arc is entirely neglected. Throughout the play the treatment of her character is on a level with the crude and mediocre lines in which she introduces herself in Act i. Scene 2.[1] Certainly if Shakspere had any hand in this scene he

[1] "Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,
My wit untrain'd in any kind of art.
Heaven and our Lady gracious, hath it pleas'd
To shine on my contemptible estate:
Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs,
And to sun's parching heat display'd my cheeks,
God's mother deigned to appear to me,
And, in a vision full of majesty,
Will'd me to leave my base vocation,
And free my country from calamity;
Her aid she promis'd and assur'd success;
In complete glory she revealed herself;
And, whereas I was black and swart before,
With those clear rays she infused on me
That beauty am I bless'd with which you may see.
Ask me what question thou canst possible,
And I will answer unpremeditated:
My courage try by combat, if thou dar'st,
And thou shalt find that I exceed my sex.
Resolve on this: thou shalt be fortunate
If thou receive me for thy warlike mate."

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showed no sign of those powers on which afterwards his fame was grounded. Scene 4 of Act ii. is supposed to be entirely by Shakspere's hand. In the Temple garden the rival factions of York and Lancaster pluck the red and white roses which for ever after were to be the badges of the quarrel. Its undoubted superiority to the rest of the play lies in the comparative dignity and self-control of the language, in the impressiveness of the dramatic situations; the small and comparatively trivial episode of the plucking of two roses of different colours by the representatives of two different branches of the family, marking the definite breach which was to widen out into a quarrel of such great magnitude.

Warwick dimly foresees the significance of the quarrel—

> "And here I prophesy, this brawl to-day
> Grown to this faction in the Temple Gardens,
> Shall send between the red rose and the white
> A thousand souls to death and deadly night."

In the same tone, but having all the greater impressiveness of maturer style and thought, is the prophecy of the Bishop of Carlisle in *Richard II.*, Act iv. Scene 1—

> "Let me prophesy;
> The blood of English shall manure the ground
> And groan for this foul act.
> . . . . . .
> And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
> Shall kin with kin, and kind with kind confound."

Concerning the authorship of *Love's Labour Lost*, written in 1590, there can be no doubt. It is a typical work of this earlier and youthful phase, when he was "a clever young man," with a brilliant and undisciplined imagination, expressing himself in language which is elaborate with puns and conceits and metaphors. The plot is entirely of Shakspere's invention: it is the result of that youthful form of reaction against conventional life which consists in imagining a life led under unconventional and ideal conditions—an ideal which generally ends in becoming the most artificial possible.

The true Shakspere shows himself in the treatment of the character of Biron. Biron is indeed a sort of anticipation of the Jaques of *As You Like It:* he bears the same relation to the story of the plot. Cynically and scornfully he falls in with the ideal plans of his companions, reserving to himself the right of

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jeering and scoffing. From the first he objects to their intellectual objects—

> "Study is like the heaven's glorious sun
> That will not be deep-search'd by saucy looks:
> Small have continual plodders ever won,
> Save base authority from others' books.
> Those earthly godfathers of heaven's light
> That give a name to every fixed star,
> Have no more profit of their shining night
> Than those that walk and wot not where they are."

He is scornful of their ascetic rules:—

> "Young blood will not obey an old decree."

He jeers at love till he, at last, falls a victim to the charms of the French lady, Rosaline. She sees through him—sees that his criticism of life is not prompted by the disappointment of a great soul, but that he is merely

> "a man replete with mocks:
> Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,
> Which he on all estates will execute.
> . . . . .
> "a gibing spirit,
> Whose influence is begot of that loose grace
> Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools."

To give earnestness to this spirit, which is cynical for the sake of being cynical, she condemns him

> "this twelvemonth from day to day
> To visit the speechless sick."

After such experience of life as may teach him its depth and seriousness, she may perhaps listen favourably to his suit.

In the *Comedy of Errors*, written after *Love's Labour Lost* in 1591, there is, as Steevens says, "more intricacy of plot than distinction of character." The plot is, indeed, one merely of incident taken from a translation of the *Manœchmi* of Plautus and in it Shakspere proves himself to be no genius in the management of incident alone. "The *dénouement*," says Steevens, "is certain from the beginning, and the error which is the result of resemblance is continued in the last scene till its power of affording entertainment is entirely lost." For the plot of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1592-93) Shakspere is supposed to have gone for some of the incidents to the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney —for others to a pastoral romance translated about this time from

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the Spanish; and thus we might suppose that he would also have difficulty in managing a plot borrowed from such an aimless and complicated source as this chivalrous novel. But although some parts of the plot are crude and strangely badly managed, the inner thread of unity to the play is given by the character of Julia. She is, as Prof. Dowden says, "the crayon sketch of Juliet." She is the first of Shakspere's simple, intense women, who always preserve their dignity and refinement by dint of their deep feeling, though, conventionally speaking, they overstep bounds. Her simplicity and naturalness seem to give the tone to the play. "It is observable," says Pope "(I know not for what cause), that the style of this comedy is less figurative and more natural and unaffected than the greater part of this author's, though it is supposed to be one of the first that he ever wrote." Her confidence and belief in the faithless Proteus is invincible. She tells her maid Lucetta not to bear a hard opinion of him—

> "Only deserve my love by loving him."

And when she is convinced of his fickleness,—when, as the page Sebastian, she is commissioned by Proteus to bear the ring she had once given to him to his new love, Silvia,—her loyalty remains unshaken.

> "Because I love him, I must pity him.
> This ring I gave him, when he parted from me,
> To bind him to remember my good will;
> And now am I (unhappy messenger)
> To plead for that which I would not obtain,
> To carry that which I would have refus'd,
> To praise his faith, which I would have disprais'd."

But to be true to herself, which is to be true to her love for him, she must be false to the command which he, as her master, has given her—

> "I am my master's true confirm'd love;
> But cannot be true servant to my master,
> Unless I prove false traitor to myself.
> Yet I will woo for him; but yet so coldly
> As, Heaven it knows, I would not have him speed."

Thus even in this first period, when he was learning the elements of his art, failing often in the construction and language of his plays, he showed interest and skill in the delineation of character; he did not deal with the hackneyed characters of the ordinary drama; he conceived them himself, drawing them with

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simplicity and truth to human nature. But his systematic study of character only began when he turned his attention to historical fact as the basis of dramas. Circumstances would naturally make him tend in this direction. In 1591 the political greatness of England was firmly established and recognised by Europe. In 1588 the failure of the Armada had practically put an end to the period of cautious and defensive warfare against Spain, that enemy of religious and political liberty. England could now afford to be on the aggressive. The help given by Elizabeth to the enemy of Spain, Henry IV. of France, the yearly expeditions against Spain, mark the beginning of that short period, ending with the accession of James I. to the throne, when England's position was brilliant and dignified—when she took up her stand in Europe as the successful rival of Spain. English patriotism had been roused to an unprecedented extent by the threatened attack of Spain in 1588: not only Protestants, but Catholics, forgetting the persecutions to which a Crown, fearful of its political existence, had subjected them, rallied enthusiastically round the government with all the strength of their feeling of insular independence. "It was no sacrilege in the eyes of the brave Lord Howard of Effingham risking his life and spending his substance, to fire a broadside into the galleons which bore the images of St. Philip or St. George on their gilded prows." This great effort of conscious and active patriotism had been crowned with success, and the comparatively brilliant foreign policy which England had since pursued had kept up the national interest in the political situation, and encouraged and stimulated patriotic enthusiasm. "In the popular literature of the period was found the inevitable reflex of this spirit—sympathy with the national history. It was the age of Pericles to which Herodotus recited the glories won by Athens at Marathon and at Salamis: it was the age of Frederick the Great in which (much to the cynical wonder of that prince) the figure of the liberator Arminius once more came to have a meaning for the German nation. And so the great national age of the latter half of Elizabeth's reign was in truth a golden time for the most directly popular expression of the nation's historic sense—the English historical drama."

The study of historical fact was of infinite benefit to Shakspere, disciplining his imagination by making him adhere strictly to the facts of actual practical life; but it was not care for his mental development, as some German commentators would seem to imply, which made him seek for his plots in the chronicles of

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Holmshed and Grafton. It was the stimulus of patriotism, probably the feeling that such work would be a professional success, that induced him to study the history of England's past. But it was not the political or national movements of the past which excited him; he made no attempt to seize the spirit of the time, as it showed itself in political crises; it was the study of the characters of those Englishmen who had been placed in prominent positions that interested him. It was in following minutely the details of the success or failure of these men that he employed his art: and he did this, with few exceptions, with great accuracy. It is because he was so true to historic fact, and therefore to human nature in these studies, that "lessons" have been drawn from the success or failure of his heroes. But of these "lessons" the dramatist himself was unconscious: he was simply interested,—what he wished to communicate was his interest in the lives and fates of these men. His historical plays are divided by Prof. Dowden into two groups: first, that including studies of kingly weakness; secondly, that including studies of kingly strength. To the first group belongs the character of Henry VI. It is strange that Shakspere should care to study Henry VI. There was in him "no vigorous basis of manhood . . . he was unworthy to be a king, utterly insensible as he was to his large responsibilities and privileges of his place . . . his supreme concern was to remain blameless." Such as he was, however, Shakspere faithfully depicts him,—a man incapable of action, cowering beneath the insults of his wife, the slave of a morbid, over-sensitive conscience, anxious to wear

"The white flower of a blameless life,"

thinking that he will reach it by leading the narrowed life of a monk, neglectful of all the duties that his high position thrust upon him.

Shakspere studied a very different character in Richard III. "I am determined to prove a villain," says Richard in the first scene,—a determination to which his subsequent conduct proves him to be faithful. The personality of Richard III. lends itself to that rather crude artistic characterisation of which Marlowe is the master, and which Shakspere, in this play, to a certain extent, imitates. "As in the plays of Marlowe, there is here one dominant figure distinguished by a few strongly marked and inordinately developed qualities. There is in the characterisation no mystery, but much of a dæmonic intensity." But Shakspere makes his Richard III. no mere abnormal monster, no fiend in

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human shape. We are made to admire, as Prof. Dowden points out, the tremendous power of intellect and the energy of will by which he makes all obstacles give way before him. Only just before his defeat and death, when the ghosts of his past rise up before him, does he experience a momentary weakness, which throws a gleam of pathos over his character, hardened by so many crimes.

> "I shall despair; there is no creature loves me;
> And if I die, no soul shall pity me."

Richard III. is the stern, determined villain; John is the weak, cowardly villain, arrogant, blustering, and cruel, with the will to be wicked, but shrinking from cowardice, not from principle from the means, unwilling to bear the responsibility of his evil deeds.

> "Had'st thou but shook thy head or made a pause,"

he says to Hubert, referring to Arthur's death,

> "When I spake darkly what I purposèd,
> Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,
> As bid me tell my tale in express words,
> Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,
> And those thy fears might have wrought fears on me."

Thus he strives to lay the supposed murder of Arthur on Hubert's shoulders.

Henry V. is Shakspere's ideal king, his conception of a national sovereign. He does not bow before him with the servile loyalty of a later age that believed in the divine right of royalty. Henry V. mixes as a common soldier with common soldiers before the battle of Agincourt. "I think the king is but a man, as I am," he says to Bates, . . . "all his senses have but human conditions." The essence of kingship does not lie

> "in the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
> The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
> The inter-tissued robe of gold and pearl,
> The farcèd title running 'fore the king,
> The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
> That beats upon the high shore of this world,"

but in its great responsibilities, its heavy duties. But the character of Henry V. is not, on the whole, one of Shakspere's great successes in characterisation. In the play of *Henry IV.*, in both parts of which the chief interest is centred on the Prince and Falstaff, and not on the cautious unenthusiastic monarch, the character of Henry is wrenched, as it were, from its natural

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and historical position by Shakspere's endeavour to make it appear as if he held aloof in his heart from the follies of his companions, only participating in them for the sake of experience, and in order to make, hereafter, an effective impression on his people.

"I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness;
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wondered at
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle."

Shakspere thus would make him to inherit his father's judgment and cold prudence. He also had aimed at impressiveness by the management of his presence. "Had I so lavish of my presence been," he says to his son, rebuking him of his follies in public places,

"So common hackneyed in the eyes of men,
So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
Had still kept loyal to possession
And left me in reputeless banishment,
A fellow of no mark, nor likelihood.
By being seldom seen, I could not stir
But, like a comet, I was wonder'd at."

But had Henry V. inherited his father's petty worldly wisdom, he could not have led with so much abandon that life in which Pistol and Falstaff considered him as their comrade; he could not in afterlife have become the dignified and massively enthusiastic king Shakspere represents him as being. One is surprised in this case that Shakspere did not remain true to the facts of human nature and of history, allowing him to sow his wild oats in earnest, to be sobered in later life by the consciousness of great and splendid responsibilities.

There are other striking inconsistencies in the character of Shakspere's Henry V. King Henry, who, with words tinged with wide and philosophic reflectiveness, rebukes the conspirators, Scroop and Cambridge—

"What shall I say to thee, lord Scroop? thou cruel,
Ingrateful, savage, and inhuman creature!
Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,
. . . . . .

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> Such and so finely boulted didst thou seem:
> And thus thy fault hath left a kind of blot,
> To mark the full-fraught man, and best endued,
> With some suspicion"—

who knows how to inspire his followers with the deepest enthusiasm for himself and his cause, who feels deeply the great duties and privileges of his office,—is utterly lost in the scene of courtship, when he pays his addresses to Katharine of France. "He has here," says Dr. Johnson, "neither the vivacity of Hal nor the grandeur of Henry." He certainly has not the dignity of Henry, but there is certainly an ill-timed reminiscence in his manner of the boisterous roughness of his later days. "If I could win a lady at leap-frog, or by vaulting into my saddle with my armour on my back, under the correction of bragging, be it spoken I should quickly leap into a wife. . . . And while thou livest, dear Kate, take a fellow of plain and uncoined honesty; for he perforce must do thee right, because he hath not the gift to woo in other places. For these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favors, they do always reason themselves out again." The scene in itself is amusing and interesting; but Henry V. at an important moment of his life would certainly not recur to that former self which, according to Shakspere, he had assumed with a definite object; if on this occasion he had felt nothing, he would have been merely diplomatic and respectful; if he had felt anything he would have expressed it with Henry's accustomed seriousness and impressiveness.

Although, therefore, regarding Henry V. as a whole, Shakspere has not been successful in giving unity to his idea of his character, yet from the point of view of dignity and impressiveness of thought and language, the plays in which he plays a part are among the finest that Shakspere has written. They contain, too, good specimens of Shakspere's humour. The relations between the Prince and "that devil in the shape of a fat old man," who haunts him, result in scenes which are among some of the most amusing that he has ever written. Even Dr. Johnson becomes enthusiastic when he speaks of him. "But Falstaff, inimitable, unimitated Falstaff, how shall I describe thee, thou compound of sense and vice, of sense which may be admired, but not esteemed; of vice which may be despised, but hardly detested?"

It is in the creation of characters like this that the nature of Shakspere's humour shows itself, proving how intimately bound up was this humour, which Schlegel calls his "irony," with his whole power of characterisation. It was not that sort of humour

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which finds its expression in the classic method of comic characterisation, in the exaggeration of one particular peculiarity of a ridiculous kind, so that the character becomes amusing by dint of being a caricature, and therefore abnormal and to a certain extent inhuman. Neither does it find expression in the comedy of incident, in the professional buffoons, in the clowns that delay the action "to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh." He is never the slave of his sense of the ridiculous. Had he been so, he would have made Falstaff purely humorous and therefore a caricature; as it is, he mixes sense with his foolishness, and a certain discretion with his cowardice. He can never separate the humorous view of things from his insight into and sympathy with the other side of human nature. He thus gives to Falstaff, who is a character infinitely more amusing than any of Ben Jonson's comic personages, his share of human interest, which enables us to realise him as a man, and to a certain extent to sympathise with him. Our feelings do not go with Henry—when newly crowned he refuses to greet his old companion. They are with the white-haired old jester, who, in spite of his sins, has pathos as being a human being rejected by an old friend. When, however, Morose in Ben Jonson's *Epicœne*, a character of much less dubious morality, is deceived by his friends, we feel that they are only administering justice to this tiresome embodiment of the silent "humour." Prof. Dowden points out the momentary pathos that is thrown over Falstaff's bad and useless life by the description of his end. "A' made a finer end, and went away an it had been any Christom child; a' parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning of the tide; for after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and a' babbled of green fields."

Shakspere is very successful in making interesting and effective the character of Richard II., though it is evident that he is not very accurate historically in representing as he does the nature of this king. In his conception of this character he was without doubt much influenced by Marlowe's play of *Edward II.*, and thus his *Richard II.* being like the *Edward II.* of Marlowe, who is the Edward II. of history, cannot be historically accurate. He has the same sense of situations as the *Edward II.*, the same sense of his royal dignity, the same impatience of advice. The play opens with the banishment of Bolingbroke, affording a grand opportunity for the exhibition of the royal

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justice and clemency. "No neighbour nearness to our sacred blood," says Richard, "shall privilege him": his sentence is only relaxed from ten to six years, when Richard, gratified by the humble yet deprecating behaviour of his uncle Gaunt, makes it an occasion for the ostentatious exercise of the royal clemency. "Thy sad aspect," he says to Gaunt, "hath from the number of his banished years plucked four away." When, however, Gaunt on his deathbed attempts to reason with the King, to give advice to him "who was not born to sue but to command," his dying words excite Richard's scorn and anger. He is "a lunatic, lean-witted fool, presuming on an ague's privilege,"—"daring with frozen admonition to make pale the royal cheek." With the opposition that is naturally excited by his misgovernment, his idea of kingly dignity, of kingly office, grows higher—

> "Not all the water in the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm off from an anointed king:
> The breath of worldly men cannot depose
> The deputy elected by the Lord."

When the conviction is forced upon him that the breath of worldly men *can* depose, "when all our lands and lives are Bolingbroke's," his attitude changes, and he begins to take an artistic delight in the situation. He finds himself not imposing, but picturesque.

> "Of comfort no man speak:
> Let's talk of graves, of worms, of epitaphs."

The truth for one moment seems to dawn upon him—

> "Throw away respect,
> Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,
> For you have but mistook me all this while:
> I live with bread like you, feel want,
> Taste grief, need friends."

It strikes him, too, for one moment that he is inadequate to his position—

> "O that I were as great
> As is my grief, or lesser than my name!"

and the next moment begs "for a little little grave, an obscure grave." His self-consciousness and fondness for conceits never leave him. He says to Aumerle—

> "Shall we play the wantons with our woes,
> And make some pretty match with shedding tears?
> As, thus:—to drop them still upon one place,
> Till they have fretted us a pair of graves
> Within the earth: and; therein laid,—There lies
> Two kinsmen digged their graves with weeping eyes."

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Even when he gives away the crown he will be picturesque—

"I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand.
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state.

He asks for a mirror to see his face, whether it is bankrupt of its majesty—

"Give me the glass, and therein will I read—
No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck
So many blows upon this face of mine,
And made no deeper wounds?"

If the present time cannot appreciate the greatness of his tragedy, it will at least make a tale which will draw tears from posterity.

"Tell thou the lamentable tale of me,
And send the hearers weeping to their beds.
. . . . . .
The senseless brands will sympathise
The heavy accent of thy moving tongue,
And in compassion weep the fire out:
And some will mourn in ashes, some coal-black,
For the deposing of a rightful king."

Richard's weak nature, warped by vanity, will have pre-eminence at any cost. His is of that sublime selfishness, terrible in its blindness, that can only regard things as they affect himself. Richard can pass through the greatest vicissitudes of fortune without profiting by experience, because utterly incapable of realising responsibility, of recognising that there are in the world other individualities besides his own towards whom he has duties. His only objects of interest in life are his own feelings; he makes a study of his own circumstances and sensations, and his own egoism suffices to make him the centre of the play. Skilfully drawn, however, as the character of Richard II. is, well-developed as it is by the action of the play, it is marked as a comparatively early play of Shakspere's by the diction and versification. Fine as the versification is in many passages, the lines are generally endstopt, denoting that earlier period of Shakspere's art when he had not yet gained that facility and flow of language, when expression ceases to observe rules, but is a law unto itself. His language is full of puns and conceits. Conceits are, indeed, the fit expression of a character like Richard's, but Shakspere makes even the gardeners to indulge in them; and the pun on

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pardonnez-moi in the solemn scene between York and the King on the discovery of the conspiracy, shows a surprising want of taste, and an incapacity for seeing the fitness of things, of which Shakspere is not often guilty.

At the same time that Shakspere was writing his historical plays he was also engaged on his comedies. His brightest and best comedies were produced between 1596 and 1601. It was later—between 1601 and 1607—that he wrote those more serious and ironical comedies, such as *All's Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida.* Perhaps in writing comedy he found some relief from the strain of the history plays and the tragedies, in which he had to deal logically with the more serious issues of life. His comedies are concerned essentially with the brighter and lighter aspects of life. His comic art is not the classic art of Ben Jonson; his primary aim is not so much to excite laughter and scorn as to give gentle and pleasant amusement—to give the picture of a life which is different from and less serious than the ordinary every-day life. What specially distinguishes his tragedy from his comedy is that in the former, dealing with the deeper currents of life and character, the interest he wishes to excite is absorbing and intense; in the latter, dealing with the lighter and more superficial currents of life, he wishes merely to attract and amuse. Prof. Dowden's definition of comedy and tragedy explains the nature of the difference between Shakspere's comic and tragic productions. "Every embodiment of thought or of passion or of will which passes considerably beyond the normal standard is tragic, or contains within it potential elements of tragedy. All embodiments of thought, passion, and volition which fall considerably below the normal standard are comic, or contain possible comic elements. Romeo is a tragic personage, because in him the passion of love has grown supremely great, and under its influence his external material life—the life of limitation—is wrecked and ruined. Hamlet is a tragic personage, because in him thought has developed itself in a way and degree which is without suitability or proportion to this finite life. Richard III. is tragic, because his will is unsatisfied by ever-renewed victory, and still needs to wreak itself absolutely upon the world. But Slender is comic, whose love of sweet Anne Page is so faint a velleity that he is compelled to borrow all the suggestions of his passion." In the tragedies it is the hero upon whom all our attention is concentrated; in the comedies our interest is mainly attracted, not by the characters who have no "souls' tragedies," and who for the most part are too slightly

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drawn to monopolise attention, but by the whole action of the play, by the relations of the characters among themselves, the history of which constitutes the plot. Shakspere's comedies belong, on the whole, to the romantic school of comedy. M. Guizot says: "Shakspere's comedy is a fantastic and romantic work of the mind, a refuge for all those delightful improbabilities which, from indolence or whim, fancy merely strings together by a thin thread, in order out of them to construct a variety of manifold complications which exhilarate and interest us without precisely meeting the test of the judgment of reason. Pleasing pictures, surprises, merry plots, curiosity stimulated, expectations deceived, mistakes of identity, witty problems leading to disguises—such were the materials of those plays innocently and lightly thrown together. It is not to be marvelled at that Shakspere's youthful and brilliant power of imagination loved to dwell on such material as these, because by means of them it could free from the severe yoke of reason—at the expense of probability produce all manner of serious and strong effects. Shakspere was able to pour everything into his comedies; and in fact he did pour everything into them, with the exception of what was irreconcilable with their system, viz. the logical connection which subordinates every part of the piece to the intention of the whole, and in each detail attests the depth, greatness, and unity of the work. In the tragedies of Shakspere it will be difficult to find any single conception, any situation, any deed of passion, any degree of vice or virtue, which will not be found to recur in one of his comedies; but what in the one reaches into the most abysmal depth and proves itself productive of consequences of the most moving force, and severely takes its place in a series of causes and results, is in the other barely suggested, merely thrown out for the moment, so as to create a fugitive impression and to lose itself with equal rapidity in a new complication."

In studying the Shakspere of the comedies we study Shakspere at play. He has thrown off for a moment his sense of the responsibilities and serious meaning of life. He finds satisfaction for his imagination in thinking of Snug, in his tender care for the "ladies," "roaring as gently as any sucking dove,"—of Titania fondling the large and clumsy head of the ass,—of Rosalind and Jaques and the Duke wandering in the forest of Arden,—of a confirmed bachelor marrying a beautiful shrew. But his comedies also contain interesting suggestions of character, though in comedy he never studies his characters, merely conceiving them distinctly enough for the purposes of the story.

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Portia, charming and playful with her scorn of her lovers, of the tipsy German suitor—

> "I will do anything, Nerissa,
> Ere I'll be married to a sponge;"

dignified with the consciousness of deep feeling when she speaks to Bassanio—

> "Though for myself alone
> I would not be ambitious in my wish
> To wish myself much better, yet for you
> I would be trebled twenty times myself;"

Beatrice, tormenting Benedick, hiding deeper feelings under a scoffing outside; Rosalind, pert and enterprising, pursuing Orlando through the forest, half-ashamed at her own impulses,—are all characters which Shakspere touches lightly, because further development might have brought out in them the elements of tragedy, and they might thus have become unfit to people the world of his comedies. In a mood tinged with melancholy Shakspere had conceived the character of the morose Jaques; but Jaques is not tragic, because he is happy in nursing that melancholy, that "most humorous sadness," which is different to everybody else's melancholy, "compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects." Shakspere will not pursue suggestions of deeper things so as to detract from the effect of the whole. Shylock speaks what we feel is a bitter truth to Antonio in that speech—

> "Signor Antonio, many a time and oft
> In the Rialto you have rated me."

He comes at times very near to deaths and killings and tragic episodes; but he is not afraid to use the materials of tragedy, because he wrote his comedies in a mood in which the serious view of life was for the moment impossible for him.

It was very natural that so many of the most interesting sketches of character in the comedies should be those of the women. M. Taine characterises all Shakspere's women as "charming children who feel with excess, and love with folly. They have unconstrained manners, little rages, pretty words of friendship, coquettish rebelliousness, a graceful volubility which recalls the warblings and prettiness of birds." To a certain extent this is true: Shakspere's women are not indeed all merry and amusing. Some are very sad, such as Julia and Juliet; some are very tragic, such as Lady Macbeth; but all for the most part have childlike, uncomplex natures. Shakspere does

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not study his women as he does his men. He can conceive them of all sorts—noble, heroic, faithful, perfidious, heartless, charming, and coquettish; but he merely conceives their characters, gives them unity and life, and then leaves them: he does not develop them; he has not given us the tragedy of a woman's soul; he has not interested us in their inward struggles; he was not himself probably interested in the problem as to what made the difference between a Rosalind and a "shrew." It is for this reason that the women play such a prominent part in Shakspere's comedies: the souls of his women have no history; they are, for the most part, associated with the lighter, happier, more peaceful aspects of human life.

The series of Shakspere's tragedies opens with that of *Romeo and Juliet*. He probably first conceived the tragedy in 1591; he probably revised it again in 1597, in that earlier and more youthful period, when the story and its surroundings would prove irresistibly attractive to him. The moonlit evenings, calm and still with the heat of an Italian summer; the passionate boy and girl, whose young vigorous love is clouded by the fatal shade of an ancient feud, the ghost of the past, which hangs over them, pointing, as it were, to their tragic destiny,—would stir his young and romantic imagination. The atmosphere of Italy, the sense of the youth and the southern nature of the lovers, must be imparted in order that the play may have charm and reality, in order that we may understand the intensity of Juliet's sudden passion, and the childlike way in which she abandons herself to it. Juliet is far the most interesting of the two lovers. Romeo is a youth following the fashion of Italian chivalry, the aim of whose life is to be in love, to whom worshipping and sighing at the feet of a mistress was a necessity of existence. Before he saw Juliet in her beauty, which hung

> "upon the cheek of night
> As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear,"

he had served the pale and scornful Rosalind. He is far less simple and natural than Juliet; he can ponder on the delights of love when Juliet's voice is calling to him; he can draw analogies between lovers, schoolboys and their books, when Juliet has just parted from him. This tragedy cannot claim to stand on a level with the later tragedies of Shakspere. It has indeed a great charm, but it has not the deeper interest of those that he conceived in his mature years. Its charm is that of a beautiful romance.

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In *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Julius Cæsar* Shakspere shows himself at his best, both as an artist in the management of plot and dramatic construction, and in the management of his characters. He takes up in them, too, his most solemn attitude with regard to the world. In the history plays he studied more, as it were, the finite issues of life, the success or the failure of men in practical life; he showed in them, by a skilful handling of character, what were the inner causes of achievement or failure. But in the tragedies he faces the deepest problems of life and death, offering no explanation of their problems, because he feels and realises them too deeply—too much from the point of the individual struggler—to care to seek for impersonal solutions. "In his great tragedies," says Mr. E. D. West, "he traces the workings of noble or lovely human characters on to the point, and no further, where they disappear into the darkness of death, and ends with a look back, never on towards anything beyond. His sternly truthful realism will not, of course, allow him to attempt a shallow poetical justice, and mete out to each of his men and women the portion of earthly good which might seem their due; and his artistic instincts—positive rather than speculative—prefer the majesty and infinite sadness of unexplainedness to any attempt to look on towards a future solution of hard riddles in human fates."

Shakspere does not lead us—

> "to take upon us the mystery of things,
> As if we were God's spies."

He does not want us to follow Macbeth after his death further

> "Into that sad obscure sequestered state,
> Where God unmakes but to remake the soul,
> He else made first in vain."

Brutus, when he denies the great principle of his life, and gives himself his death; Hamlet, when he leaves the world, where he had "drawn his breath in pain and doubt,"—disappear into the "undiscovered country," and Shakspere follows them with no speculation. He is sternly truthful: it must be enough for us that they have lived and struggled and suffered. Some of them have added "to the high tradition of humanity:" all appeal to us because of their share in the deep experiences of humanity, because they have known the good and the evil of life, its temptations, its crimes, its sorrow, and its remorse.

Shakspere in his Roman plays draws the same interest from

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classic history as he had from modern history. He studied not the movements of things, but the inward life of the heroes of a movement. In *Julius Cæsar* we feel no excitement in the political crisis: it is the characterisation, specially that of Brutus, which interests us—the career of a man whose life is guided by the highest, most unselfish motives, but who makes the fatal sacrifice of a true friendship to a false idea of duty, and is led gradually into a course of action in which he contradicts all the ruling principles of his life. At last he is driven to act

> "Even by the rule of that philosophy
> By which I did blame Cato for the death
> Which he did give himself."

Brutus is so noble and so single-minded that he cannot see through the complex villainy of Cassius: he is so Roman to the backbone that he conceives it to be a duty to sacrifice his friend to what he conceives to be the good of the state. His honour is tied to the freedom of Rome; the state is his god: he makes of it a religion, and as ascetics think it their duty to crush the smallest earthly feeling they find growing in them, even if it be only care and fondness for a plant or a flower, so Brutus, conscious of the strength of his affection for Cæsar, is more inclined to listen to the promptings of Cassius when he suggests that Cæsar must be removed or he will ruin Rome—

> "What you would work me to, I have some aim,
> . . . . . .
> . . . What you have said
> I will consider: what you have to say
> I will with patience hear, and find a time
> Both meet to hear and answer such high things."

In Scene 1 of Act ii. Brutus, in a soliloquy, as involved in thought as in expression, as significant in the history of this man as the famous speech "To be or not to be" is in Hamlet's, makes his fatal decision—

> "It must be by his death; and for my part
> I know no personal cause to spurn at him;
> . . . . . .
> How that might change his nature, there's the question.
> It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
> And that craves wary walking. Crown him?
> That:—
> And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
> That at his will he may do danger with.
> The abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins

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Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face:
But when he once attains the upmost round
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend: so Cæsar may;
Then, lest he may, prevent. And since the quarrel
Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities:
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg,
Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell."

Brutus's future career is thus under the dominion of this necessity, which his decision has created. His tragedy emphasizes the fact that the responsibilities of human actions are indeed inevitable and far-reaching: "Our deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds." Brutus is hurried into conspiracy; his nature rebelling at every step. He revolts against the secrecy necessary to the success of his scheme—

"O Conspiracy!
Shamest thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
When evils are most free? O then by day
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous image."

He strives to keep both himself and the conspirators in remembrance of their sacred object—the freedom of Rome, for which the life of Cæsar is a necessary sacrifice. Their common enthusiasm for a noble object must be the bond between them—

"Swear priests and cowards and men cautelous,
. . . But do not stain the even virtue of our enterprise,
To think that or our cause or our performance
Did need an oath."

It is no common sacrifice that he is making: his feeling for Cæsar finds expression when he speaks of the probable fate of Mark Antony after Cæsar has fallen—

"If he love Cæsar, all that he can do
Is to himself,—take thought, and die for Cæsar."

"Pity," he says to Antony after the deed has been done, to the general wrong of Rome, . . . "hath done this deed to

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Cæsar. Mark Antony was a dear friend of Cæsar's: but Brutus's love to Cæsar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer,—not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more." Eventually, in Act iv. Scene 3, comes the inevitable quarrel between Brutus and Cassius. The immediate end of the conspiracy being accomplished, the divergence in their motives cannot long remain unnoticed: Brutus killed Cæsar because he wished to save Rome from the tyranny of one; Cassius because he hated that Cæsar should be that one. "Shall one of us," says Brutus,

> "that struck the foremost man of all the world
> Contaminate our fingers with false bribes?"

By one false step he has linked his fortunes with Cassius—he is inevitably associated with one who maintains his ascendency by bribery and corruption. Cæsar, less ideal, but with more practical wisdom than Brutus, understood and distrusted Cassius—

> "I do not know the man I should avoid
> So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
> He is a great observer and he looks
> Quite through the deeds of men. . . .
> . . . .
> Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
> Whiles they behold a greater than themselves."

But Brutus is incapable of understanding the lower nature of Cassius: after his anger has passed away he believes in him again fully. But Cassius cannot fill the place of Cæsar in his heart; he still believes that he has done right, but the memory of his violated friendship haunts him. Remorse takes form in the external world, in the dead figure of Cæsar appearing to him —"Thy evil spirit, Brutus." His courage and resolution leave him. After the defeat at Philippi he kills himself.

> "Night hangs upon mine eyes: my bones would rest,
> That have but labor'd to attain this hour."

The play is wrongly called *Julius Cæsar*. Even Mark Antony, with his passionate love for Cæsar, "for the noblest man that ever lived in the tide of times," is a far more prominent figure than Cæsar. The shrewdness and self-control of his famous speech, the result of a settled scheme which no Roman could have believed the pleasure-loving Antony was capable of forming, entitle him to far more consideration than Cæsar. Shakspere

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seems to have wished to throw Cæsar into the background, to prevent sympathy being excited by his fall.

Only on a few occasions does Shakspere do justice to the real greatness of Cæsar's character. "Cowards die many times before their deaths," he says, resisting the entreaties of Calpurnia—

> "The valiant never taste of death but once.
> Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
> It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
> Seeing that Death, a necessary end,
> Will come when it will come."

And Shakspere cannot detract from the pathos of Cæsar's cry, as he sees Brutus among the conspirators: "*Et tu Brute*,—Then fall Cæsar!" But the tragedy is the tragedy of Brutus, and not of Julius Cæsar.

"Character is Destiny," says Novalis; and although this puts the case far too strongly, yet Shakspere could almost have taken this sentence for his motto in the tragedy of *Macbeth*. It is indeed the theme of his tragedies, and nowhere more strongly stated than in *Macbeth*. "By thy first step awry," says Roger Chillingworth to Hester Prynne, "thou didst plant the germ of evil, but since that moment it has all been a dark necessity." The mingled web of good and evil springing from our acts is what Shakspere studied in the history plays: in the tragedies, and especially in the tragedy of *Macbeth*, he shows the intricate labyrinth of evil, in which, by a wrong deed, a human being can become involved. In the tragedy of *Macbeth* he shows the gradual steps in the downward career of a man whose first crime, prompted by ambition, determines a future career of evil thoughts and evil actions. Before he commits his first crime the struggle with his better nature is hard and long. "Thou wouldst be great," says Lady Macbeth of him—

> "Art not without ambition, but without
> The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly
> That wouldst thou holily: wouldst not play false,
> And yet wouldst wrongly win."

To her Macbeth's compunctions are weakness: it is not that she sacrifices nothing to gain her purpose: she has strong affections for her husband, for her father—"Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it:" but there exists for her nothing in heaven or earth which should prevent her from crushing these feelings in order to gain her object.

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"Come, you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts,
Unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty!"

She will not live a coward in her own esteem, letting "'I dare not' wait upon 'I would.'" It is implied that Lady Macbeth is no stalwart tragedy queen, but a delicate little woman: it is she who, when the strain is over,—when the objects of ambition are reached,—becomes mad; it is she who is thoroughly unbalanced by the memory of the deed: but it is Macbeth, of stronger physical nature, yet of less determined, ruthless character, who is haunted continually by a moral remorse, who implores "the sun and firm set earth"—

"Hear not my steps, which way they walk,
For fear the very stones prate of my whereabout;"

who hears the voices crying "Macbeth doth murder sleep: Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more."

The first step has been taken: and further crimes have become a dark necessity. Banquo has suspicions: therefore he must be murdered: yet it is implied that Macbeth does not desire this solely from fear. There lingers yet enough good in his nature to make him feel rebuked in Banquo's presence—

"In his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd."

But "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill"—

"I am in blood stepp'd in so far,
That, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er."

Crime cannot altogether harden him: even his success cannot quench that remorse and that weariness of life that grows upon him. His better nature now does not struggle, "his eternal jewel has been given to the common enemy of man:" but it lives on in him, and makes him weary and disgusted with a life that seems empty and purposeless.

"I have lived long enough, my way of life
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf.
. . . . .
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day

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To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow: a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

Macbeth's nature was ruined by the purpose to which ambition urged him. The tragedy of *Hamlet* is the tragedy of a life that was ruined by a purpose that circumstances thrust upon it, which Hamlet, by the very strength of his feelings, by the width of his sympathies, was unable to carry out. Suddenly life became to him full of one great responsibility, which forced him to cut all the ties of his past life, to forego all his hopes of happiness in the future: his will was not equal to the effort, and thus we have the tragedy of *Hamlet*. "Remember thee," he says of his wronged father, whose ghost cries for revenge—

"Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain
Unmixed with baser matter."

Thoughtful and inactive by nature, "the native hue of resolution sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," shrinking before a revenge which is to destroy all the most cherished conditions of his life, he vacillates and hesitates, and brings misery on those he loves best without accomplishing his end. He takes leave of Ophelia; "he raised a sigh so piteous and profound, as it did seem to shatter all his bulk and end his being." He must appear to be mad, in order to deceive her and others,—in order to account, without rousing suspicion, for the strangeness of his conduct. "I love you not: get you to a nunnery." He tries thus to conceal a love the full force of which overwhelms him at her death. "I lov'd Ophelia: forty thousand brothers could not, with all their quantity of love, make up my sum."

Life becomes too hard for him. He is oppressed by its miseries and responsibilities. At one moment he curses the Destiny that would force him to action: at another he laments his nature that cannot be roused.

"O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,

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But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze, indeed,
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing."

Conscience has made a coward of Hamlet: "life is a sea of troubles:" may it not be better to seek the rest of death than to take arms against them? His will is puzzled; instead of acting he "unpacks" his heart with words. "The last moments of Hamlet's life," says Professor Dowden, "are well spent, and for energy and foresight are the noblest moments of his existence; he snatches the poisoned bowl from Horatio and saves his friend; he gives his dying voice to Fortinbras, and saves his country."

In these tragedies we find Shakspere at the height of his powers. Others of his plays, written about the same period of his life, testify also to the fact that his genius was in its prime. *Coriolanus*, written in 1608, can be taken, as Professor Dowden says, as forming a contrast in every way to *Julius Cæsar*. Brutus sacrifices everything to his impersonal enthusiasms; Coriolanus is the impersonation of egoism, of personal arrogance and class-prejudice. He sacrifices everything to his pride—it outweighs his patriotism, and to gratify it he deserts his country. "Despising, for you, the city," he says to the mob,

"thus I turn my back:
There is a world elsewhere."

One little touch of tenderness made his life a practical failure, but redeemed it from being a moral blot—

"O mother, you have won a happy victory for Rome;
But for your son, believe it, O believe it,
Most dangerously you have with him prevailed,
If not most mortal to him."

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Between *Julius Cæsar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* there are also those points of connection arising from contrast. "In the one an ideal of duty is dominant; the other is a divinisation of pleasure, followed by the remorseless Nemesis of eternal law." Antony is the slave of his desires, powerless to act, destitute of self-control, under the influence of Cleopatra. Mrs. Jameson speaks with admiration of Shakspere's treatment of this woman's character. "Great crimes, springing from high passions, grafted on high qualities, are the legitimate source of tragic poetry. But to make the extreme of littleness produce an effect like grandeur—to make the excess of frailty produce an effect like power—to heap up together all that is most unsubstantial, frivolous, vain, contemptible, and variable, till the worthlessness be lost in the magnitude, and a sense of the sublime spring from the very elements of littleness,—to do this belonged only to Shakspere, that worker of miracles. Cleopatra is a brilliant antithesis, a compound of contradictions of all that we most hate with what we most admire." In *Othello* there is the tragedy of two simple and believing souls, whose lives are ruined by a being who is the incarnation of maliciousness, who loves evil and wickedness for its own sake. The Moor, in the single-heartedness of his passions, whether of love or of jealousy, is as easy a victim for Iago as Desdemona, who has all the simplicity of innocence that suspects nothing.

"*King Lear*," says Professor Dowden, "is the greatest single achievement in poetry of the Teutonic or northern genius." Shakspere has nowhere more touching conceptions than the characters of Cordelia and Lear and his faithful fool; no more touching scene than that in which Lear, who has thirsted all his life for a little affection, cannot believe that the one being who would give it him is dead—

> "Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha!
> What is't thou sayst?—Her voice was ever soft,
> Gentle, and low."

At the close of his life Shakspere wrote the romances of *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. They are the expressions of Shakspere's serene and sympathetic old age. "In the latest plays of Shakspere the sympathetic reader can discern unmistakably a certain abandonment of the common joy of the world, a certain remoteness from the usual pleasures and sadnesses of life, and at the same time, all the more, this tender

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bending over those who are, like children, still absorbed in their individual joy and sorrow."

Romances are not always the work of a youthful imagination. Less crude, more sympathetic, and more true is the fancy of genius in its old age, stimulated by memories. Shakspere in his last years could even conceive creatures of the imagination pure and simple. Critics may strive in vain to find out whether by Caliban Shakspere meant the people, or the understanding apart from the imagination, or the primitive man abandoned to himself, or the missing link, or one of the powers of nature over which the scientific intellect (in *The Tempest* represented by Prospero) obtains command, or the colony of Virginia. Caliban exists only in the imaginary world as the impersonation of unintelligent animal nature. Mr. Browning has done more than any critic to make us realise the conception—

> "Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is done,
> Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
> With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin,
> And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,
> And feels about his spine, small eft things course,
> Run in and out each arm and make him laugh;
> And while above his head a pompion plant,
> Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
> Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard;
> And now a flower drops with a bee inside,
> And now a fruit to snap at, catch, and crunch,—
> He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams cross
> And recross till they weave a spider's web."

That clumsy sort of idealisation that consists in allegory was never Shakspere's. Morals may be drawn from him, but they are unconscious. Many of his lines which have become almost proverbs fall from him quite casually, and sometimes even in a way that appears as if he had not realised their full meaning. "The interpretations of the words of genius are often wider than the thought which prompted them." Shakspere was probably not aware that he was enunciating one of the greatest truths when he makes Henry V. say—

> "There is a soul of goodness in things evil
> Would men observingly distil it out;"

for he adds, with the narrowest application of it,—

> "For our bad neighbour makes us early stirrers,
> Which is both helpful and good husbandry."

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It is Polonius, the incarnation of worldly wisdom, who says in the middle of a speech, in which he is exhorting Laertes to dress well, not to lend or borrow money—

> "To thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man."

"Lessons" may be drawn from the studies of character in the historical plays and the tragedies; but even Dr. Johnson, much as he would have liked it, cannot convict Shakspere of being a preacher: his aim, he laments, is more to amuse than to instruct by being moral. There is indeed a deep moral hidden in every one of Shakspere's tragedies; but it is there unconsciously—it is the moral that lies hidden away behind life itself. It is because Shakspere's great nature reflected all the facts of the world so truthfully and so fully that his works contain for us an inspiration, an everlasting beauty and interest. "If the facts of the world be themselves sacred—parts of a divine order of things, and interpenetrated by that supreme reality, apprehended yet unknowable, of which the worlds of matter and of mind are a manifestation—then Shakspere is the truest moralist we have had, because he encourages us to observe closely the world and its life." It is his reverence and devotion to truth and reality, his love for and his interest in everything that is human, cramped and narrowed by no artificial standard of right and wrong, that will make him live as a great artist and unconscious teacher till the end of time. He shows us that life is very beautiful, very interesting, very important, never futile, though we may understand neither its beginning nor its end. "Even though death end all, these things at least *are*—beauty and force, purity, sin and love, anguish and joy. These things are, and therefore life cannot be a little idle whirl of dust. We are shown the strong man taken in the toils, the sinner sinking farther and farther away from light and reality and the substantial life of things, into the dubious and the dusk, the pure heart all vital and confident and joyous. We are shown the glad vicarious sacrifice of soul for soul, the malign activity of evil, the vindication of right by the true justiciary; we are shown the good common things of the world and the good things that are rare—the love of parents and children, the comradeship of good men, the exquisite vivacity, courage, and high-spirited intellect of noble girlhood, the devotion of man and woman to man and woman—the vision of life rises

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before us and we know that the vision represents a reality." In the light of Shakspere's soul are paled all false ideals. Behind that art which makes him the greatest of all dramatists lay a nature that was not only inspired by the beautiful, but penetrated with the grandeur of truth.

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CHAPTER X.

BEN JONSON.

Born 1573; educated at Westminster School; probably went to St. John's College, Cambridge; for a short time connected with his step-father's bricklaying business; then joined the army and went to the Low Countries; on his return settled in London not later than 1597; became an actor; married; and in 1619 became Poet Laureate; died August 1635.

TRAGEDIES.

Sejanus, acted by 1603; *Catiline*, acted by 1611.

COMEDIES.

Every Man in His Humour, acted by 1597 or 1598; *Every Man out of His Humour*, acted by 1599; *The Case is Altered*, acted by 1599; *Cynthia's Revels*, acted by 1600; *The Poetaster*, acted by 1601; *Volpone*, acted by 1605; *Epicœne*, acted by 1609; *The Alchemist*, acted by 1610; *Bartholomew Fair*, acted by 1614; *The Devil is an Ass*, acted by 1616; *The Staple of News*, acted by 1625; *The New Inn*, acted by 1629; *The Magnetic Lady*, acted by 1632; *The Tale of a Tub*, acted by 1633.

FRAGMENTS: Found after his Death.

The Fall of Mortimer (a tragedy); *The Sad Shepherd* (a pastoral).

"HE is a great lover and praiser of himself; a contemner and scorner of others; given rather to lose a friend than a jest; jealous of every word or action of those about him (especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he liveth); a dissembler of ill-parts which reign in him, a bragger of some good that he wanteth; thinketh nothing well but what either he himself or some of his friends and countrymen hath said or done; he is passionately kind and angry; careless either to gain or keep; vindicative, but, if he be well answered, at himself. . . . For any religion, as being versed in both. Interpreteth best sayings and deeds often to the worst, oppressed with fantasie,

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which hath ever mastered his reason, a general disease in many poets. His inventions are smooth and easy: but above all he excelleth in a translation." Such was Drummond's summary of the personality and powers of Ben Jonson—written shortly after the poet had paid him a visit of two or three weeks during his stay in Scotland in 1618. But the grain of salt which one must take with the judgment of one poet on another is a very large one; full allowance must be made for the moods of genius: one must allow in this case for the mood of the sensitive melancholy Drummond, irritated perhaps by the egoistic and wine-excited Jonson, who evidently with superabundant energy, freed from the claims of work, had loudly vaunted himself and his talents, at the expense of his contemporaries. "He was better versed and he knew more in Greek and Latin," he said, "than all the poets in England." Ben Jonson's personality was likely to be misunderstood by his contemporaries, and especially by those in the same walk of life. He had all the faults of an eager creative nature, irritability, excitability intensified by drink, and that extreme belief in himself and his powers which was far more than the self-confidence of genius,—far more than that self-confidence which Michael Angelo said was necessary to every artist, so that, believing in himself, "he may produce something of worth and value." Had we to trust alone to Jonson's contemporaries for an estimate of his personality, we should form but an unpleasing idea of it. But to Jonson's discredit as a dramatist, be it said, no artist has left a greater impress of self on his works: to understand the individuality of this great Elizabethan, we have only to turn to his plays, for it stands there towering above all his creations, massive, egoistic, and self-conscious. He was the most self-conscious, as Shakspere was the most unself-conscious of Elizabethan artists; he had none of the impersonal philosophic interest in life which makes the ideal dramatist. Too egoistic to feel outward influences strongly, he had none of that power of assimilating and growing by experience so characteristic of Shakspere, so marked in his literary work; we are always aware of his personality as we read his dramas; he is always present behind his creations, conscious of a great ideal, pointing out the follies and the vices of a world, with whose inhabitants he seems to have no feeling of human fellowship. Yet his life was full and varied, and he acquired in the course of it a vast stock of knowledge, both practical and literary, which he turned to account in his dramatic work. Placed first at a school in Charing Cross, he was afterwards removed to West-

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minster School, where his intellectual welfare was carefully looked after by the antiquary Camden, one of the masters there, and from whom he acquired the habit, to which he always steadily adhered, of writing all his compositions first in prose, then afterwards turning them into verse. It was probably Camden's stimulus, added to his natural tastes and aptitude, that made him dive deep then and in after life into all sorts of branches of learning, searching for that knowledge—

> "The nectar that keeps sweet,
> A perfect soul even in this grave of sin."

Shortly after the completion of his education here, following on a vain attempt to pursue his stepfather's trade and become a bricklayer, he served in a campaign in the Low Countries, where English troops were assisting Maurice of Nassau. Here it was that he gained the "rudiments of military science," and that respect for the profession which he shows in the epilogue to the *Poetaster*, the conception of the character of Captain Tucca in this play being in no way intended to detract from the honour of that "great profession which I once did prove." After his return, his marriage with "a shrew, yet honest," he began his career in connection with Henslowe's company, probably first as an actor, then as an author; Henslowe, as was his custom, furnishing the ready money, which was to support him till he completed the required plays. The facts of his life bear evidence to noble traits in his character, to that seriousness of thought and that interest in the deeper problems of life which gave him his strong moral tone, which made him unlike other Elizabethan artists, deeply interested in questions of religious faith, causing him to be converted once from the Protestant to the Catholic faith, then again, twelve years after, to the Protestant faith again; making him a diligent student of theology, writing—

> "Those humble gleanings of divinity,
> After the fathers and those wiser guides,
> Whom faction had not drawn to study sides,"

which were lost in the burning of his library. And his independence of patrons, which he himself loudly vaunted, "never esteeming a man for the name of a lord," was doubtless a fact. He had indeed friends among the nobility, but it was probably friendship not interest that made the attachment. Pembroke, whose discrimination made him worthy to be the friend of any genius, sent him always at the beginning of every new year £20

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with which to buy books; but Sir Walter Raleigh, to one of whose sons Jonson was tutor in 1613, and who might thus have been used by him as a stepping-stone to worldly greatness, was lightly thought of by him. "Sir W. Raleigh," he said, "esteems more of fame than of conscience: the best wits of England were employed for making his historie." The social standing of an author evidently did not influence Jonson's criticism on his works; he hesitated not, when in Paris, to tell Cardinal du Perron that his translations of *Virgil* were naught. As for royal favour, there is no evidence of his having received any under Elizabeth, though she was present at a representation of *Every Man in His Humour*, and though he was called upon by a fellow-poet to write a lament on her death; and the patronage he received from James I. and Charles I., the name and honour of Laureate, the reversion of the office of the Master of the Rolls, the pension of 100 marks, first given by James I. and continued by Charles I., in deference to a hint given by the poet, in the *New Inn*, 1629, were all of the nature of rewards to the capable and versatile poet, who supplied the court with entertaining and varied masks. And that his devotion to the service of the court was not the result of a servile spirit, but of a belief in its power of being an influence for good, is abundantly shown in his address to it, "the special fountain of manners," prefixed to *Cynthia's Revels*. "Thou art a beautiful and brave spring and waterest all the noble plants of this island. In thee the whole kingdom dresseth itself, and is ambitious to use thee as her glass. Beware then thou render men's figures truly, and teach them no less to hate their deformities than to love their forms: for to grace these should come reverence, and no man call that lovely which is not also venerable. It is not powdering, perfuming, and every day smelling of the tailor, converteth to a beautiful object, but a mind shining through any suit which needs no false light either of riches or honor to help it." And to a court, which to him was the representative of all the refinement and beauty and elevation in the United Kingdom, Ben Jonson was always the faithful "servant but not slave."

Even to the darker facts of his life, his quarrels with his literary associates, there is much that should justly be urged as palliation. Ben Jonson was a most careful and conscientious worker, with a high ideal of what the stage ought to be, and although it cannot be said of him, as of Ovid in the *Poetaster*, that his sharpness was most excusable—

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"As being forced out of a suffering virtue
Oppressed with the license of the times,"

yet that want of magnanimity, approaching to spite, which tinged his reflections on his adversaries in *Cynthia's Revels* and the *Poetaster*, was partly due to the grief which he felt at seeing the stage lowered by the slovenly work of men, who looked upon it merely as a lucrative profession, and who therefore would write anything likely to take with the public. Conscious, too, of high aims dutifully carried out in his dramatic work, he was angry with the public who, coming to the theatre to be entertained, did not appreciate the careful, purposeful, and moral works of art which he sometimes put before them.

"'Twere simple fury still thyself to waste
On such as have no taste,"

he writes in the *Ode to Himself*, turning the tables on his contemptuous audience—

"Minds that are great and free
Should not on fortune pause,
'Tis crown enough to virtue still, her own applause."

If the "dainty age cannot endure reproof . . . yet do not demean self by serving the stage," but

"Sing high and aloof,
Safe from the wolf's black jaw and the dull asses' throat."

Yet it must be said that Jonson's tone shows that he thought not so much of "the crown of virtue" as of the "squeamish censure of the king's subjects." He could administer to himself much moral consolation derived from the reflection that

"The vast rude swinge of general confluence
Is, in particular ends, exempt from sense;"

that

"Custom in course of honour even errs,
And they are best whom fortune least prefers;"

but he was not one of those who could be calmly resigned in the sense of the superiority of unappreciatedness. The irritable tone in which he administers this consolation to himself is akin to that of a modern poet, who invents the most telling literary abuse to fling at those whose pin-pricks of criticism he affects hardly to have felt. Jonson, having carefully elaborated and

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polished his pearl, could never forgive the swine for being indiscriminating beasts: it was his nature to think more of the value of what he threw before them than of its suitability to their needs; and never, too, could he forgive those who strove to adapt their work to these needs. For artists who had real artistic promptings, who instinctively wrote on a high level, he had sincere admiration and friendship. Beaumont he calls his son—was pleased to have his criticism; with Fletcher he was friendly; and at the Mermaid Tavern and afterwards at the "Devil," he used to mix freely with other dramatists and poets, and celebrate those lyric feasts of which Herrick wrote—

> "When wine did make them
> Not mad, but nobly wild."

He was kind to the rising young authors, who gathered round him as a "Metropolitan in poetry," and we may conclude that it was possible even for a repentant renegade in art to enter into his favour, for in 1604, not long after the publication of *Satiromastix*, we find Dekker dedicating the *Malcontent* to him.

But, above all, we are indebted to him for the most profoundly intelligent and admiring criticism that any fellow-poet has passed on Shakspere. The "Johannes-factotum, the Shakescene of a county," the bird dressed in borrowed feathers, is celebrated justly by Ben Jonson as the "soul of the age," the embodiment of all that was greatest in the thought and feeling of the great Elizabethan period. To another great poetic mind Shakspere recommended himself by the sweetness of "his native wood notes wild:" to Ben Jonson it is his art which calls for deepest admiration, or rather that interpenetration in his work of nature and of art, for—

> "Nature is made better by no mean,
> But nature makes that mean; so that over art
> Which you say adds to nature, is an art
> That nature makes."

And this art was especially Shakspere's, shared by him with all great creating natures. "Not to thy nature alone must my praise be given," writes Ben Jonson—

> "Thy art,
> My gentle Shakspere, must enjoy a part,
> For though the poet's matter nature be,
> His art doth give the fashion . . .
> . . . . . .
> For a good poet's made as well as born,
> And such wert thou! Look how the father's face

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Lives in his issue, even so the race
Of Shakspere's mind and manners brightly shine
In his well-turned and new filed lines."

The key to much of Ben Jonson's work, as well as the explanation of many of the incidents of his literary career which appear not greatly to his credit, lies in the fact that he looked upon the stage as a great and responsible profession, capable of attaining a high ideal. It was his endeavour to make dramatic art bring out the deeper meaning of life, to make it reflect the profoundness and the reality of things and not only the play of fleeting emotions and passions. To be a great teacher, to make the stage a mighty influence for good, not merely to serve as the play of life—this was the struggle of Ben Jonson's career. It was of this great ideal that he was always conscious, too conscious for his powers as an artist; it is this that sometimes makes his plays heavy and dull with purpose—that makes him neglect his plot in order to bring out certain points of character—that makes him stand by and explain his characters, instead of making them live and act for themselves: and it was because he was conscious of a great mission as a dramatic artist that he was fierce against those who refused to help it either as author or spectator. Only too truly was it said of him by Sir John Suckling—

"He too deserv'd the bays,
For his were called works, while other's were but plays:"

only too truthfully was his epitaph inscribed

"O rare Ben Jonson,"

for he was rare in that age of passionate, spontaneous, uncontrolled men—a man who had a moral genius above his age, who had moral vision enough to be its teacher, but who failed in that artistic strength which should have fused into one whole his powers of conception and creation.

Even in the lowest branch of dramatic art, in masks and pageants, which, it might have been assumed, were legitimately intended to entertain, Ben Jonson endeavoured to introduce a deeper meaning. He came into collision with Inigo Jones because he tried to reduce the scenic and decorative element in masks,—to give more interest in character and a deeper significance to the action. If he had been thoroughly successful in his efforts he would have destroyed the essential difference between the mask and the drama. The distinctive elements in

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the mask are "the spectacle, the general *mise-en-scène*, the ideas suggested by dancing, scenery, and lyric song, with a varying proportion of declamation and dialogue." The distinctive elements in the drama are the element of action and of character. In the idea of the mask there was no fixed law as to the proportion of declamation and dialogue to the decorative element; in its most elaborate scenic form it resembled the pageant; but in the hands of Ben Jonson the predominance of the elements of character and significant action approximated it to the drama proper, much to the disgust of Inigo Jones. In writing masks Jonson found not only lucrative employment,—the mask being an entertainment much sought after at Court, as gratifying its exclusive and aristocratic tastes,—but employment which was congenial to his soul, in which he could deal with the symbolism and deeper significance of facts. "Allusiveness," as Mr. Ward says, "was the soul of the mask, for these entertainments were generally called for on the occasion of some great public or royal domestic event, and the talent and ingenuity of the artist was much exercised in giving double and appropriate meanings to action and character." Jonson, by the nature of his mind, was admirably qualified to succeed in these allegorical renderings, and his masks are distinguished by a greater symbolism and a deeper meaning than had before been customary. Personifications of virtues, which in the hands of ordinary mask writers would have been meaningless and conventional, assume in his hands a moral intention. What can be more hackneyed, as a rule, than the personification of Truth, yet this figure in Jonson's *Hymenal, or the Solemnities of Masque and Barriers*, performed at the marriage of the Earl of Essex, is striking and significant.

"Upon her head she wears a crown of stars,
Through which her orient hair waves to her waist,
By which believing mortals hold her fast,
And in these golden cords are carried even,
Till with her breath she blows them up to heaven.
She wears a robe enchased with eagles' eyes,
To signify her sight in mysteries:
Upon each shoulder sits a milk-white dove,
And at her feet do witty serpents move:
Her spacious arms do reach from east to west,
And you may see her heart shine through her breast.
Her right hand holds a sun with burning rays,
Her left a curious bunch of golden keys,
With which heaven's gates she locketh and displays.
A crystal mirror hangeth at her breast,
By which men's consciences are searched and drest;

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On her coach wheels Hypocrisy lies racked ;
And squint-eyed Slander with Vainglory backed
Her bright eyes burn to dust, in which shines Fate :
An angel ushers her triumphant gait,
Whilst with her fingers fans of stars she twists,
And with them beats back Error, clad in mists.
Eternal unity behind her shines,
That fire and water, earth and air combines.
Her voice is like a trumpet, loud and shrill,
Which bids all sounds in earth and heaven be still."

Here, as elsewhere, Jonson shows himself as belonging to that Teutonic race that developed Puritanism, never at ease in the mere contemplation of beauty, only happy when piercing into the depths and finding moral significance.

To such a mind, serious in its views, conscious of high aims and of the significance of life, tragedy might seem a suitable field. But to tragedy Ben Jonson did not take naturally: he was driven to it by the storm which he had raised around him by the publication of *Cynthia's Revels* and the *Poetaster*. "Since the comic muse," he says,

"Hath proved so ominous to me, I will try
If tragedy have a more kind aspect."

It was not to express his own soul that he wrote tragedy.

"If I prove the pleasure of but one,
So he judicious be, he shall be alone
A theatre unto me."

Always, Ben Jonson wrote for, and was conscious of an audience: always, while writing, must he have been conscious of the impression that his work would make on others.

For the subject of his first tragedy (and this is characteristic, for Jonson in order to bring out his ideas had always recourse to contrasts) he chose the degenerate days of Rome,—when Romans were no longer animated by the soul of godlike Cato, "he that durst be good, when Cæsar durst be evil;" nor by the spirit of "constant Brutus," proof against all charm of benefit. He chooses the time when they are dead, when "they have fled the light"—

"Those mighty spirits
Lie raked up with their ashes in their urns,
And not a spark of their eternal fire
Glows in a present bosom."

Thus laments Silvius, the senator, who alone in his integrity

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is worthy to represent the old spirit of Rome, and who, as such, is the deadly enemy of Sejanus. For Sejanus rises to power on the decay of this spirit and the ruins of the free institutions of Rome. At the close of his life he can say—

> "All Rome hath been my slave,
> The senate sat an idle looker-on
> And witness of my power, when I have blush'd
> More to command, than it to suffer: all
> The Fathers have sat ready and prepared
> To give me empire, temples, or their throats
> When I would ask them, and (what crowns the top),
> Rome, senate, people, all the world have seen
> Jove but my equal, Cæsar but my second."

Sejanus has risen to this position through crime upon crime: the climax of the action of the piece is when Rome is his slave, and Cæsar his creature. "Thy thoughts are ours in all," says Tiberius, marking as it were the culmination of the action. The fall begins when Sejanus rouses the suspicion of Tiberius by asking for the hand of his daughter-in-law Livia; while in the retirement of the country, where Sejanus supposes him to be occupied in pleasures which distract him from public business, his instrument Sertorius Macro, openly the friend of Sejanus, secretly communicates to the emperor the result of his observations on Sejanus's ambitious designs. Tiberius, without breaking with Sejanus, prepares his ruin, which happens dramatically in the Senate, to which Sejanus has been lured under pretext of being invested with new honours. He is first separated from his guards, then crushed by a letter from the emperor read before the Senate, disclosing all Sejanus's plans: accused and condemned, he is denied judicial punishment, and torn to pieces by the mob, who the day before hung upon his look—"no less than human life on human destiny." The plot is neatly constructed and well worked out. In the course of the action Jonson finds occasion for the enunciation of much unquestioned sentiment and moral truism, for the display of much knowledge, inclining one to say of the author, in the words of a character in the *Staple of News*, "he is an errant learned man that wrote it," and also for the dignified expression of a Roman, and at the same time Jonsonian, fortitude which he puts into the mouth of Silvius—

> "O you equal gods
> Whose justice not a world of wolf-turn'd men
> Shall make me to accuse, howe'er provoked
> Have I, for this, so oft engaged myself,

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Stood in the heat and fervour of a fight,
When Phœbus sooner hath forsook the day
Than I the field against the blue-eyed Gauls
And crisped Germans . . .

. . . . . .

It is not life, whereof I stand enamoured,
Nor shall my end make me accuse my fall;
The coward and the valiant man must fall,
Only the cause and manner how discerns them."

There is a hint of Jonson's half fierce, half comic, social satire in the scenes between Livia and her physician Eudemus; but of characterisation, in the full and proper sense of the word, there is little. The personality of the characters is distinct, and especially is our attention fixed on that of Sejanus and Tiberius: but neither are complex creations, in neither is there that inward struggle of motive and of will which is the essence of the highest dramatic characterisation. Sejanus is ambition—cunning, ingenious ambition—personified, falling before the forces of Destiny. Tiberius is the weak slave of the strong, who has yet cunning enough to scheme the fall of his tyrant, without breaking with him or awakening his dangerous suspicions.

To feel what this drama wants, compare it with one of Shakspere's Roman plays—*Julius Cæsar*, for instance. It may not be inferior to it in plot, in interest of incident, in construction; it is not below it at times in dignity and force of language; but is there any character in it which calls forth in us the same interest as that which we must unhesitatingly give to the character of Brutus? is there any sign in the conceptions of the character of Sejanus and Tiberius that Ben Jonson realised that the true interest of the dramatic characterisation lies in the artistic rendering of the psychological struggle of motive and of will. Sejanus's soliloquies are secret plottings to procure the satisfaction of single-minded ambition; Tiberius, the secret plottings of a weak cunning nature to ruin Sejanus without premature discovery by him. Unity of character is preserved throughout; but of characterisation, in the deeper sense of the word, there is none.

Of this tragedy Ben Jonson himself had the highest opinion. In his dedicatory letter to Lord Aubigny, he says, "If ever any ruin were so great as to survive, I think this be one I send you, the fall of Sejanus;" and to the reader he says, "If in truth of argument, dignity of persons, gravity and height of

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elevation, fulness and frequency of sentence, I have discharged the office of a tragic writer, let not the absence of these forms (the three unities of the classic drama) be imputed to me." But not truth of argument, dignity of persons, etc., united even to the three classic unities, can make the ideal tragedy. Ben Jonson failed here as he failed in all his dramatic work: his characterisation is too crude and too coarse; he fails in observing and understanding the complexity of human nature; he has made only a superficial study of the inward mental life, which is the spring of action.

Perhaps in "fulness and frequency of sentence" his tragedy of *Catiline* is superior to that of *Sejanus*, but the personages in it, with the exception of Cicero, show that exaggerated distinctness of personality which arises from too exclusively dwelling on one peculiarity,—a tendency to which Jonson, from the very nature of his theory of characterisation, was specially liable. It is from *Catiline* that Charles Lamb has quoted the fine scene of the meeting of the three principal conspirators, opening with the well-known imagery of dawn, which Ben Jonson's genius has here rescued from the commonplace—

> "It is, methinks, a morning full of fate:
> It riseth slowly as her sullen car
> Had all the weights of sleep and death hung at it.
> She is not rosy-fingered, but swoln black.
> Her face is like a water turn'd to blood,
> And her sick head is bound about with clouds,
> As if she threatened night ere noon of day."

It was in the field of comedy that Jonson's genius found its happiest development: it was in comedy that he could best give expression to his idea of characterisation, his theory of humours: it was in comedy that he could best be the teacher of his age, that he could best lash the follies of his time. Jonson's theory of humours embraces not only his idea of characterisation, but also his deepest philosophy of life. Humour to Jonson means neither outward peculiarity, neither the whim nor caprice, it is taken to mean by Shakspere, neither that humour in the modern sense, which is as superior to wit, says Sir William Temple, as easiness to knowledge. By this term Jonson means those elements in the human constitution which influence the physical and mental being: the humours of the body are choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood; those which influence the mental being are certain qualities of the mind, one of which predominating and so possessing a man, "draws all his affects, spirits, and

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powers, to turn one away." Thus his action is determined, and knowing the humour you can prophesy of the action. In the same sense Bacon uses the word when he says "it is a different thing to understand men's humours and yet to fail in business transactions," though probably Jonson would differ from Bacon as to the all-importance of studying the humours of mankind, for to Jonson the study of humours was the one key to the knowledge of man: it made the interest of character, it gave the clue to action. It was the one thing ~~which to him made~~ characterisation possible. In tragedy a predominant impulse determining ~~action had~~ given unity to his characters: in comedy a ruling peculiarity, generally of a ridiculous kind, made him realise his personage. No better analysis of the workings of a gradually predominating quality can be found than in the speech of Kitely in *Every Man in his Humour*, when he finds his mind gradually becoming a prey to jealousy—

> "First it begins
> Solely to work upon the phantasy,
> Filling her seat with such pestiferous air
> As soon corrupts the judgment: and from thence
> Sends like contagion to the memory:
> Still each to other giving the infection,
> Which as a subtle vapour spreads itself
> Confusedly through every sensive part
> Till not a thought or motion in the mind
> Be free from the black poison of suspect."

Needless to say, Ben Jonson's comic characters are always caricatures—Captain Bobadil, Master Stephen, ~~Master Mathew~~, are exceedingly amusing: but they are amusing because they are abnormal: ~~they~~ are human ~~nature perverted~~. Captain Bobadil would undertake, "for the benefit of the State, not only to spare the entire lives of the Queen's subjects in general, but to save the half, nay, the three parts of her yearly charge of holding war," by a plan of choosing twenty gentlemen of good spirit, strong and able constitution, taught the special rules of fence till they were almost as good as himself, who should slowly but surely, in two hundred days, challenge and kill by twenties the enemy's army of 40,000 strong. He is an example of the military humour, but he is an abnormal soldier: as unique in his exaggerated propensities as is Mr. Pecksniff among architects and fathers, and Mr. Stiggins among Methodist preachers. So too Master Mathew, of a literary humour, who reads aloud to Captain Bobadil, whom he has not yet found tedious from his

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dearth of judgment, "a little thing of his own," wherein he celebrates "the happy state of turtle-billing lovers." He sympathises with Stephen (who describes himself as "somewhat melancholy, yet you shall command me, sir, in anything incident to a gentleman")—"I am melancholy myself, divers times, sir," he says to Stephen, "and then I do no more but take pen and paper, and presently overflow you half a score or a dozen sonnets at a sitting." Equally amusing is Captain Tucca (of the *Poetaster*), for whom poetry has as great a repulsion as it has attractions for Mathew and Stephen. Ovid the younger vexes his father by his devotion to letters. Captain Tucca endeavours to heal the family breach, and to bring Ovid the younger to reason. "Come hither, Callimachus, thy father tells me thou art too poetical, boy; thou must not be so: thou must leave them, young novice, thou must: they are a sort of poor starved rascals, that are ever wrapped up in foul linen, and can boast of nothing but a lean visage, peering out of a seam-rent suit, the very emblems of beggary." Without doubt there is a great deal of truth in these sketches, viewed as conceptions of character, and certainly the theory which underlay their production did a vast deal in the way of reforming the comic stage, in relieving it from the practical jokes, the low buffooning incidents, which before had been considered as constituting comedy: it certainly did make predominant on the comic stage the interest of characterisation: but the characterisation was of a crude sort, too much of the nature of caricature. If Jonson had dealt with Shylock he would have reflected none of the complexities of the Jew's character: he would simply have dwelt on his avarice as overshadowing every other quality. It would have been for ever "O my ducats, O my daughter." The complete theory of humours Jonson has not given us. "Ah, what misery," says Kitely, "in such extremes, to want the mind's erection."

> "Let the mind go still with the bodie's stature;
> Judgment is fit for judges, give me nature,"

says Amelia, in *The Case is Altered*. The details of the practical lesson Ben Jonson wished to convey by holding extremes up to ridicule,—the means he would take to cultivate judgment, self-control, "to give the mind's erection,"—are points concerning which, contrary to his usual custom, he gives us no advice. He certainly cannot have suggested, as a practical solution of the problem, the moral of *Every Man out of his Humour*, where he shows that every humour can be cured by its own excess. That

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Jonson was conscious of working a reform in comedy is evident from the prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*, which is thoroughly and intensely characteristic of him from the first line to the last, touching on his superiority to most poets, the excellence of his comedy as compared to that popularly appreciated, the moral good it intends to do by sporting with human follies instead of human crimes.

> "Though need make many poets, and some such
> As art and nature have not bettered much,
> Yet ours for want hath not so served the stage
> As he dare serve the ill customs of the age,
> Or purchase your delight at such a rate
> As, for it he himself must justly hate
> . . . . .
> He rather prays you will be pleased to see
> One such to-day, as other plays should be."

The personages *his* comedy chooses are such as true comedy, by which we may suppose him to mean classic comedy, would choose, in order to hold an image up to the times. But so anxious is he to make his art a lesson, so anxious to personify vice in character and hold it up to ridicule, that he loses sight of the modifying attributes which human nature, however perverted, seldom loses, and in his endeavour to be improving he falsifies his art. Human nature is essentially complex, and the mind that cannot mirror it in all its complexity can never be that of a great dramatic artist.

The Case is Altered deserves attention among Ben Jonson's earlier comedies, because the great moralist, not being absorbed in the creation of characters destined to convey moral lessons to the audience, had time to pay attention to his plot, which in the first two comedies had decidedly suffered from his absorption in the characterisation. After the fifth scene the plot of *Every Man in his Humour* becomes more and more involved, and evidently, according to the author's view, of less and less importance. *Every Man out of his Humour*, Schlegel calls "a rhapsody of ridiculous scenes, without connexion or progress." *The Case is Altered* is a comedy of intrigue, in which the action is the chief interest. Its story is based on two Latin plays, of which the plots are interwoven with considerable ingenuity. But plot alone could not occupy Jonson: in this play he gave a hint of that tendency towards personal satire which afterwards, more fully developed, troubled so greatly the literary atmosphere. Antonio Balladino, the pageant poet, was thought to be identifiable with Anthony

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Munday; and the satiric treatment of this character was the first step on the road towards that general and personal satire of his fellow dramatists, which was his absorbing purpose in *Cynthia's Revels* and the *Poetaster*.

Angry with those who did not take the same high and moral view of art as himself, conscious of a just "severity in the fashion and collection of himself," and wrath with the carelessness and conventionality of many of his fellow playwrights, he embodied in *Cynthia's Revels* a satire of the fiercest kind against the folly of those who "conform to conventional demands, contrasting their ends and aims with those of the true poet and artist who wishes to please the highest authorities in taste, and is true to his own high standard." It contained, strictly speaking, no personal satire, unless the allusion to promoters of other men's jests be meant to refer directly to Lyly, Marston, and perhaps Dekker; it was a defiance to actors in general, likely to touch those who were not conscious of stupendous aims, and looked upon the stage as a profession; it was general satire in the sense that the cap was not actually put by Jonson on the heads of those who plainly in his mind and in their own belonged to this class; but it was personal in that the cap was certainly thrown suggestively at their feet.

Dekker and Marston are not actually personified in Ben Jonson's creations, neither is Crites, "that creature of a most perfect and divine temper, so truly learned that he affects not to show it," actually identifiable with Ben Jonson. Jonson was too much of a dramatist to identify himself entirely with one of his creations, yet at the same time he was too egoistic to separate the personality of himself and his enemies from his conceptions of character. Crites represented probably Ben Jonson's ideal, and we know how far he, "clear and confident as Jove," believed himself to have attained it.

Interest in character and absorption in satire made him neglect the construction of his play; "as the play drags its slow length along it becomes little more than a picture of manners." Mixed with a Puritan sententiousness, which at times recalls the great poet of Puritanism, Spenser—

> "O how despised and base a thing is man
> If he not strive to check his grovelling thoughts,"

are passages of true humour. Specially real and unforced is that dealing with the then rather hackneyed idea, a constant moral reflection of the time, that the face is not the index of the

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mind, as Dion in *Philaster* says, "Men's hearts and faces being so far asunder that they hold no intelligence." Amorphous, a courtier, whose attractions are so irresistible that he has had to catalogue the names of three hundred and forty-five ladies, "all nobly, if not princely, descended," who fell victims to his charms, endeavours to prove this point to Asotus, a courtier aspirant. He acts faces to him: each, he says, "appearing as his most proper and genuine aspect."

"First," he says, "for your merchant or city face, 'tis this,—a dull plodding face, still looking in a direct line forward. There is no great matter in this face. Then have you your student's or academic face, which is here an honest, simple, and methodical face, but somewhat more spread than the former. The third is your soldier's face,—a menacing and astounding face, that looks broad and big: the grace of this face consisteth much in a beard. The anti-face to this is your lawyer's face,—a contracted, subtle, and intricate face, full of quirks and turnings, a labyrinthean face, now angularly, now circularly, every way aspected. . . . But now to come to your face of faces, or courtier's face,—'tis of three sorts, according to our subdivision of a courtier, elementary, practic, and theoretic. Your courtier theoretic is he that hath arrived to his furthest, and doth know the court rather by speculation than by practice; and this is his face: a fastidious and oblique face that looks as if it went with a vice and were screw'd thus. Your courtier practic is he that is yet in his path, his course, his way, and hath not touched the punctilio or point of his hopes; his face is here: a most promising, open, smooth, and overflowing face, that seems as it would run and pour itself into you. . . . The courtier elementary, he that is in the alphabet of his courtship: a light, revelling, and protesting face, now smiling, which you may help much with a wanton wagging of your head."

But the main interest of the piece for Jonson's contemporaries consisted in the storm that it raised in the literary atmosphere.

Dramatists, especially those with whom Jonson had worked, did not stop to consider the moral justice of the rebukes administered by Crites; they concentrated their attention on the vindictive intention they saw in the poet's mind. He, hearing that they intended to take revenge through the pen of Dekker, wrote in haste the *Poetaster*,—abundant evidence that the previous satire was general only in name, and sad evidence, too, of that petty spite which was continually dragging Jonson down to earth,

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degrading him for the time below the level of those whom he wished to chastise. It is much kinder to Jonson's memory to avoid the comparison of this play with the *Frogs* of Aristophanes; it serves simply to bring out the fact that while Aristophanes interests himself in contrasting and comparing two poetic types of the highest order, Jonson interests himself solely in comparing his own aims and views with those of adversaries, whose purpose and action he does all he can to blast. Dekker under the name of Demetrius, Marston as Crispinus, are arraigned for having "most ignorantly, foolishly, and, more like themselves, maliciously gone about to deprave and calumniate the person and writings of Quintus Horatius Flaccus, poet and priest to the muses, and to that end mutually conspired and plotted, taxing him falsely of self-love, arrogance, and impudence, railing, filching translation, etc." Ultimately, and this is slightly to the credit of Jonson, the highest poetic honours are given to Virgil, by whom it is almost certain Chapman is meant, although some commentators have endeavoured to see in him the representative of Shakspere, on the strength of lines which are indeed applicable to him—

> "That which he hath writ
> Is with such judgment labor'd and distill'd
> Through all the needful uses of our lives,
> That could a man remember but his lines
> He should not touch at any serious point,
> But he might breathe his spirit out of him."

Quintus Horatius Flaccus is the loved Horace of Cæsar, proud of a soul "free as Cæsar's," conscious of a virtuous justice that will give to all what he knows is due, that considers jealousy and ignorance the cause of detraction of virtuous merit.

Undoubtedly, Ben Jonson, posing as virtuous merit, cherished by the imperial discriminating patron, would have been sufficiently annoying, apart from the direct attacks contained in the *Poetaster*, to have alone sharpened the darts flung at him in the *Satiromastix*. And it speaks well for Jonson that, after his affectation of learning, his perversity in setting himself against the public voice, his old clothes, his peculiar personal appearance, his general arrogance contrasted with the modest merit of Demetrius and Crispinus, have been touched upon, the greatest stress is laid upon the slowness and carefulness and elaborateness of his literary workmanship,—surely no fault in him, either as artist or man. On his first appearance in the play he is repre-

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sented as sitting in his study, surrounded with numerous books, endeavouring in vain to overcome a difficult line. "I, thy inspired priest," he murmurs again and again, "in flowing numbers filled with sprite and flame—sprite and flame,"—and advances no further in his address to his muse. Nevertheless, so hurt was he by the storm he had raised, so far exceeding in force and fury his expectations,—"As for the players," he says, "'tis true I taxed them; and yet but some, and those so sparingly," that he betook himself to tragedy.

It was when he returned from tragedy that he did his best work, that he produced his comedies, in three of which—*Volpone, The Fox; The Alchemist;* and *Epicœne, The Silent Woman*—he shows himself at the height of his powers: in *Volpone*, having entirely overcome his tendency to neglect the element of action; in *Epicœne*, showing such power in the good construction of plot as to call forth the praise of Dryden; in all avoiding the clumsy introduction of byplots, which, although pretty in themselves —like that of the loves of Ovid and Julia in the *Poetaster*— are like neglected threads in a piece of work, and spoil it as finished art. The characters live and act for themselves, not explaining themselves or being explained by the conscious analysis of the author, as in *Every Man in his Humour;* the moral is more subtly wrapped up, there are fewer sententious utterances; in fact, these productions of Jonson's strike one less as works than as plays—there is more spontaneity, less evidence of labour and of purpose in their composition. But *The Alchemist* and *Volpone* were written with direct moral intention—*The Alchemist* was to do its best to explode that belief which had for so long absorbed scientific energy, a belief for which Jonson had no tolerance, not seeing, like Bacon, that it fulfilled a purpose in cultivating the field of science, and, like the spades of the sons in Æsop's fable, did a useful work, though it failed in unearthing the imaginary buried treasure. But a nature like that of Jonson's, which saw only a little way, but saw that very clearly, could have no forbearance for the Alchemist, who boasts that he

> "Can extract the souls of all things by his art,
> . . . . . teach dull nature
> What her own forces are."

In the person of Sir Epicure Mammon, who believes "he (the Alchemist) is a divine instructor," Jonson jeers at the popular credulity with his fiercest satire.

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In *Volpone*, a play which, as Coleridge says, is an instance of the difficulty of keeping up interest in a story where none of the characters have goodness of heart, Jonson thunders a moral against seekers after wealth, poetic justice being brought about by the mutual ruin inflicted by the wicked and cunning on those who are more wicked and more cunning. Voltore and Corbuccio are simply wicked, Volpone is wicked and cunning, but Moscha is so wicked and so cunning as to be simply inhuman. Celia, the one pure spirit in the play, in her cry,

> "Are heaven and saints then nothing?
> Will they be blind and stupid?"

is silenced by the husband, who holds honour as a breath, a mere term, invented to awe fools. Ultimately Moscha turns round upon his master, whom he had at first aided and abetted in his devices to wring presents from his greedy friends; but in disclosing the guilt of others his own cannot be hidden, and general ruin is the result.

In *Epicœne* justice is administered in the course of the action on Morose, the embodiment of that humour "who is afflicted by all discourses but his own," all others appearing to him harsh and irksome. He marries what he thinks to be a silent woman, ultimately discovered to be a talkative boy.

Bartholomew Fair, another play which marks the prime of Jonson, had its moral too. It contains a picture of London life, similar in its details to that *Vanity Fair* from which a sterner Puritan counselled the Christian to fly; but so little acknowledged sympathy had Jonson with these ascetic moralists, the enemies of the playhouse, that he filled this comedy with bitter satire against them. But specially scornful is he of those who will endeavour to fit the satire of this play on to actual persons. "Let no one," he says, "be so solemnly ridiculous as to search out who was meant by the gingerbread woman, who by the hobby-horse man, who by the costard-monger; nay, who by their wares. Or that will pretend to affirm, on his own inspired ignorance, what Mirror of Magistrates is meant by the justice, what great lady by the pig-woman, what concealed statesman by the seller of mouse-traps, and so of the rest."

But only with reference to the historic view of Jonson's dramatic attainments is it necessary to notice the good construction of his plots: other interest they can have none for us. They are inexpressibly coarse—they deal with the manners and customs of

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a society which apparently had the lowest possible standards of morality. They point no morals for us. But what will always interest us—what gives Jonson the same claim to fame as Dickens will always have—are his caricatures of well-known, universal types; of Sir John Daw, the literary and supercilious, eager to give his opinion on literature in general:—"Aristotle, a mere commonplace fellow; Plato, a discourser; Thucydides and Livy, tedious and dry; Tacitus, an untied knot, sometimes worth the untying—very seldom." . . . The poets . . . not worthy to be named as authors. Homer, an old, tedious, prolix ass, talks of curries and chines of beef; Virgil, of manuring land and bees; Horace, of I know not what." . . . Lady Would-be, the *femme savante*, who quarrels with her husband "in poetic fury and historic storms," who has a little studied physic, but now

> "I'm all for music, save in the forenoon
> An hour or two for painting. I would have
> A lady indeed to have all, letters and arts,
> Be able to discourse, to write, to paint,
> But principal as Plato holds your music;"

who is at the same time all that a lady ought to be, with a high standard of the proper: she would not seem

> "Forward or violent, as the courtier says
> It comes too near rusticity in a lady,
> Which I would shun by all means."

Jonson, in his *Discoveries*, says: "The only decay or hurt of the best man's reputation with the people is, their wits have outlived the people's palates;" but his last plays illustrate the truth that decay of reputation comes from within, not only from without; when desire to write outlives the spirit that inspires. Jonson's decline is certainly that of a great artist, but not of the greatest. His work is not, like Shakspere's,—heavy, and sometimes unartistic with the weight of thought,—gathered from the experience of a full life; his style has not the involution given by over-condensation of matter, but it is stiff and empty: though still careful and elaborate, full of aim and purpose, his style has lost spontaneity and become mannerism. He falls into his old faults. In the *Magnetic Lady* the humours of the persons are described rather than illustrated by the action. In *The New Inn*, the plot is ridiculous and unmanageable; and in *The Tale of a Tub*, a picture of rural life, though there is much evidence of care and

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attention, there is little of that freshness and vivacity which are required to make a picture of rural manners pleasing. It seems almost as if the *Sad Shepherd*, a fragment of which was found after his death, must have been written at an earlier stage in his career, so remarkable is it for its freshness and simplicity, striking even as proceeding from the pen of Ben Jonson at his prime, free from all mannerism, all pomp of style, bearing no suggestion in itself of that reform which here, even in the sphere of the pastoral, he wished to work. The pastoral was perhaps the most hopelessly conventional form of art. Originally Art's refuge from the forms and conventionalities of actual life, it had become the most hackneyed of all artistic spheres. It had never had real simplicity; it had never breathed the real spirit of nature—the spirit of Wordsworth's poetry—except in its earliest form in the hands of the Sicilians. The idea of a world of shepherds and shepherdesses, with primitive natural beliefs and customs, came to be a vehicle for social satire, not only for that implied by the contrast of this so-called ideal simplicity with the corruptions of society, but for actual, direct satire on the customs and institutions of society. *The Shepherd's Calendar* of Spenser contains eclogues of vehement raillery against the friars; and ultimately the pastoral degenerated into that ornamental elaborate form of art of which Fletcher's pastoral *The Faithful Shepherdess* is an example, when the pastoral drama became simply the machinery by which to introduce graceful songs, lyrics, and dances; or it became simply a burlesque, especially in the hands of northern nations, who had that capacity for humour which would hold no form of art sacred. But the artificiality of the pastoral, even in its most flourishing periods in Spain under Philips I. and II., in England in the Augustan age, in France during the Watteau period, was never a secret to the artists who employed it. It was this artificiality that the robust genius of Jonson wished to minimise; his success, as far as his own attempt in this form of art was concerned, was complete. Instead of the conventional shepherds and shepherdesses, whose loves and hates made the action of the drama, he introduced the inspiriting and vigorous national legend of Robin Hood, well known through those ballads written when Robin Hood drew all popular feeling to him as the embodiment of the people's resistance against the forest encroachments of the Norman kings. Robin Hood and his Merry Men and Maid Marian are sufficiently real and simple characters to give vitality to a pas-

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toral, and sufficiently rural in their natures and their ways to give that rustic air which should be the distinctive feature of the pastoral drama. The place of the stereotyped gods and goddesses is taken by witches, also familiar and natural conceptions to the English mind; but Jonson's witches are neither the half objective, half subjective creations of Shakspere, who suggest evil thoughts and deeds to men, nor the creatures of Middleton's imagination, who give to men help in procuring the means for executing the evil designs which they themselves unaided have conceived: they are things of independent malice and power, who delight in tormenting human beings—things to be tracked out and hunted, enemies to man's peace and his comfort. Alkin, an old shepherd, instructs Robin Hood's men how to find a witch and how she is to be hunted—

> "Within a gloomy dimble she doth dwell,
> Down in a pit o'ergrown with brakes and briars,
> Close by the ruins of a shaken abbey,
> Torn with an earthquake down unto the ground,
> 'Mongst graves, and grots, near an old charnel-house."

He knows "all her wiles and turns"—

> "The venom'd plants
> Wherewith she kills: where the sad mandrake grows,
> Whose groans are deathful; the dead numbing night-shade;
> The stupefying hemlock; adder's tongue,
> And martegan; the shrieks of luckless owls
> We hear, and croaking night-crows in the air;
> Green-bellied snakes; blue fire drakes in the sky;
> And giddy flitter mice with leather wings;
> And scaly beetles with their habergeons,
> That make a humming murmur as they fly;
> There, in the stocks of trees, white fays do dwell,
> And span-long elves that dance about a pool,
> With each a little changeling in their arms;
> And airy spirits play with falling stars,
> And mount the sphere of fire to kiss the moon;
> While she sits reading by the glow-worm's light,
> Or rotten wood o'er which the worm hath crept,
> The baneful schedule of her nocent charms,
> And binding characters, through which she wounds
> Her puppets, the sigilla of her witchcraft."

It is this fragment of the *Sad Shepherd* which shows us the versatility of Ben Jonson's genius. The same hand that wrote the stiff, frigid, pompous declamations that are to be found in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, could produce verse such as this, and verse

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which in its simple sweetness is rivalled only by that of Beaumont and Fletcher—

> "Though I am young and cannot tell
> Either what Death or Love is well,
> Yet I have heard they both bear darts,
> And both do aim at human hearts."

He could write the fervent simple love scenes between Maid Marian and Robin Hood—

> "I'll grow to your embraces, till two souls
> Distilled into kisses through our lips,
> Do make one spirit of love,"—

where passion is unmixed with that philosophic reflection and analysis of the nature of Love, found in the love scenes of the *Poetaster* and in *The New Inn*. One cannot help wishing that the simplicity of pure unmixed feeling, which is so characteristic of his genius in the *Sad Shepherd*, had distinguished it also in the romances of his other plays. The failure of the love scenes between Ovid and Julia in the *Poetaster* is emphasized by the comparisons they suggest between this play and that most passionate of all of Shakspere's plays, *Romeo and Juliet*, and one instinctively compares the abandoned passion of Romeo with the frigid reasoning of Ovid. Julia, at night, calls to Ovid from her window; she wishes for Death, because after Death their souls can have that life together which Life denies them. Ovid replies—

> "O stay, my love; the hopes thou dost conceive
> Of thy quick death, and of thy future life,
> Are not authentical. Thou choosest death
> So thou mightst joy thy love in the other life.
> But know, my princely love, when thou art dead,
> Thou only must survive in perfect soul;
> And in the soul are no affections:
> We pour out our affections with our blood;
> And with our blood's affections fade our loves.
> No life hath love in such sweet state as this;
> No essence is so dear to moody sense,
> As flesh and blood, whose quintessence is sense.
> Beauty composed of flesh and blood moves more
> And is more plausible to blood and flesh
> Than spiritual beauty can be to the spirit.
> Such apprehension as we have in dreams
> (When sleep, the bond of senses, locks them up),
> Such shall we have when death destroys them quite,
> If love be then thy object, change not life."

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This same pedantic attitude of mind is specially characteristic of *The New Inn* or *The Light*, where Jonson's views on the nature of ideal love are fully stated. To Lovel, the hero of this comedy—

> "All thoughts, all passions, all delights
> That stir this mortal frame,
> Are but the messengers of Love,
> And feed his secret flame."

"There is no life on earth, he says, but being in love; there are no studies, no delights, no business, no intercourse, no trade of sense or soul." Then he proceeds to answer the question, "What is Love," and although the definitions do real and infinite credit to Jonson's morality, so ideal in an age when Love was corrupted and debased, yet he lacks, as Mr. Ward says, "the Miltonic afflatus with which to wing this noble morality:"—

> "Love is a spiritual coupling of two souls,
> So much more excellent as it least relates
> Unto the body; circular, eternal;
> Not feign'd or made but born; and then so precious
> As nought can value it but itself; so free,
> As nothing can command it but itself.
> And in itself so round and liberal,
> As, where it favours, it bestows itself.
> But we must take and understand this love,
> Along still as a name of dignity,
> Not pleasure.
> True love hath no unworthy thought, no light,
> Loose, unbecoming appetite, or strain;
> But fixed, constant, pure, immutable.
> . . . . . .
> And love is never true that is not lasting,
> No more than any can be pure or perfect
> That entertains more than one object."

Not the nobility of Jonson's morality but his consciousness of it was the snare of his genius. His great sense of moral superiority to his age, though this superiority was real not imagined, gave him too much of the attitude of a teacher, to allow of his being a truly great artist: it caused him to disfigure his work by suggestions of egoism and arrogance, which characterised only too forcibly his strong personality. Yet Ben Jonson has great claims to the memory and admiration of posterity, not only because he possessed, in common with other artists of his great age, a various many-sided imaginative nature, with the capacity for expressing itself in rich and abun-

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dant language, but because, in addition to this, he influenced powerfully the development of the drama. And thus, not only by his theory of comic characterisation, which, though crude, did much to reform the comic stage, giving to it the idea of interest in character, replacing that which belongs to a lower stage of art, viz. interest in incident alone; but by his conscientious work and high aims as a dramatist, he gave a true and high ideal to dramatic art and the dramatic profession,—an ideal to which the genius of Shakspere had unconsciously conformed, and which, although neglected by Jonson's successors, will always remain the true one of a great national drama.

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CHAPTER XI.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

FLETCHER, JOHN, *born* December 1579; went to Bene't College, Cambridge, 1591.

BEAUMONT, FRANCIS, *born* probably 1585; went for a short time to Broadgate's Hall, Oxford; entered the Inner Temple, 1600. Probably a few years later the friendship between the two poets began. Beaumont *died* 1616; Fletcher *died* 1625. Principal works written:—

(1) By FLETCHER alone—*The Faithful Shepherdess*, prob. by 1610; *The Loyal Subject*, 1618; (?) *Bonduca*, before 1619; (?) *Valentinian*, before 1619; *The Pilgrim*, first acted 1621; *The Wild Goose Chase*, 1621; *The Custom of the Country*, before 1628; *The Elder Brother*, acted after 1625; (?) *Nice Valour, or the Passionate Madman*, about 1624.

(2) By BEAUMONT and FLETCHER together—(?) *The Woman Hater*, acted 1606-07; *Philaster*, circ. 1608; *The Maid's Tragedy*, circ. 1610; *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, circ. 1611; *Cupid's Revenge*, 1612; (?) *The Honest Man's Fortune*, 1613; *Four Plays in One*, before 1616; (?) *Thierry and Theodoret*, before 1616.

BEAUMONT and FLETCHER lived when the more glorious phase of the Elizabethan had passed away—when men were no longer stirred and excited—when their emotions were no longer stimulated and purified by great events and great crises which broke through the crust of convention, and called forth the real humanity underneath. They lived when the large national life had been superseded by the mean grovelling politics of James I.'s Court, at variance alike with the interests and instincts of the nation,—when a cultivated Court which had surrounded and worshipped Gloriana, the perfect queen, idealised by fervid imaginations, had given place to profligate and illiterate courtiers, dealing out shameless flattery to a weak and unimpressive king. Cowardice and self-seeking had taken the place in political life of bravery and patriotism, and belief in the national capabilities: a time of depression, the inevitable reaction following on an eager life lived at high pressure, had come: the

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enthusiasm that had prompted heroic and great deeds and emotions had not only passed away, but had given place to a scepticism which scoffed at its very existence, and which justified itself at the expense of belief in the nobler side of humanity. It is of such an age that Beaumont and Fletcher are the representatives: their works are a truthful reflection of its thoughts and feelings, of its attitude towards life and the world: they recognise the existence and the power of emotions which play on the surface of life, but of impersonal enthusiasms and of the deepest and grandest feelings of human nature they have no conception. It is said that the truly great, whether in science or art, are always above their age; that they are unconsciously its teachers; that their vision is not the commonplace one of the ordinary mortal, but the ideal one of a prophet, the vision of what the human race might be, of what it might some day attain. All our greatest men, artists or not, have been raised above the world to which they appealed, by a point of view to which they have been always faithful, which has made the platform from which they have spoken to their fellow-men. But among these men Beaumont and Fletcher cannot be ranked. They indeed emerge above the mass of their contemporaries, but they are not distinguished by virtue of their insight into the deeper currents and problems of life; their poetry is not "the finer breath of life:" it is too much the breath of the coarse, degenerate age in which they lived. What made the source of their popularity with their age and of their interest with ours, is their intense sense of the picturesque situations which this life offered,—situations which brought out the more obvious pathos and tragedy of life, which called forth the tenderness, the self-devotion, the real passions and feelings of men and women, their power of telling a story, and above all their power of giving the most graceful, charming, and musical expression to the feelings and thoughts of their characters. Their view of their own age is vivid, glowing, and intense; all that they comprehend they feel; they share their age's want of aspiration, its scepticism, but it is a scepticism which brings no pain or bitterness with it, because their soul is filled with the surface interest of life—it affords them all the satisfaction they require. There is about their work a truthfulness to human nature as they conceive it, a reality in their treatment of the limited emotions they comprehend, and a genius in the capacity for simple sweet expression, which will always give them a decided place among artists. They had no theory about their art, like Ben Jonson. They

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wrote, and this is the secret of the excellence of their style, because they felt impelled to write for the sake of writing; both of them were men of good position, who had no need to seek their fortune as playwrights. To them, as they express it in the *Triumph of Love*—

> "Sweet poetry's
> A flower, where men like bees and spiders may
> Bear poison, or else sweets and wax away;
> Be venom-bearing spiders they that will,
> I'll be the bee, and suck the honey still."

Poetry, to them, was the result of nature: it came by natural process; it was not that elaborate structure of art as conceived by the highminded but self-conscious Jonson.

It was because neither Beaumont nor Fletcher possessed genius of the first order, that their partnership was so possible and so complete. Great genius implies a strong and marked individuality in its possessor; "it is a divinity which doth hedge" even one great genius from another; but genius such as that of Beaumont and Fletcher has its points of view in common; it showed itself in this case capable of a partnership so intimate as to succeed in baffling the subtlest analysis aiming at distinguishing mind from mind. Commentators have spent a vast amount of energy and ingenuity in attempting the distinction; some speak of Beaumont's judgment, of Fletcher's fancy, of "Fletcher's keen treble and deep Beaumont's bass," but it is impossible to discern any tangible difference between their work: they are rather "the two full congenial souls, twin stars that roll round Shakspere's sun." Differences of individuality there must have been, but none so decided as to make it possible to distinguish the work of one from the other. Perhaps, as one commentator says, the plays that Fletcher wrote alone are less moral than those which he wrote with Beaumont, and his diction when writing alone is perhaps more exaggerated in its tendencies; his verse has more feminine endings, is sweeter, more tender, and therefore more liable to the faults of weakness and feebleness, than it was when he wrote in conjunction with Beaumont. The Elizabethan stage was very familiar with the idea of dramatic partnership, though probably none so intimate had before occurred; Shakspere, Ben Jonson, Chapman, Dekker, Middleton, and Wm. Rowley, had all known what it was to work in partnership. As Mr. Ward says, they either worked with one another, or made additions to old plays, eking out the labour of fellow dramatists, till it was not known where the work

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of one began and that of the other ended; but this partnership of Beaumont and Fletcher's, so complete, moved the wonder and admiration even of their age—

> "Both for both, not semi wits:
> Each piece is wholly two, yet never splits:
> Ye are not two faculties and one soul still
> He the understanding, thou the quick free-will
> But as two voices in one song embrace,
> Fletcher's keen treble and deep Beaumont's bass.
> Two full congenial souls: still both prevailed,
> His house and thine were quartered not impaled."

Mr. Ward in calmer prose says, "It is my belief that Beaumont and Fletcher were both dramatic poets of sufficiently high ability to be able to work as equals, and to conceive in thorough harmony with each other what in certain points of form they may have to a great degree executed independently. Neither of them was so great that a fusion of their creative powers was impossible, or so small that they intentionally avoided it."

Both were cultivated men of tolerably high social rank. Fletcher, born 1579, was the son of a man who was successively President of Corpus Christi, Oxford, minister of Rye in Sussex, Dean of Peterboro', Bishop of Bristol, and Bishop of London. Fletcher inherited from his father half his books; and perhaps the traditions of his family did much in stimulating him to a literary career; a paternal uncle, Giles, was a writer of travels; his cousins Phineas and Giles were conspicuous in literature, the former being the author of the *Purple Island*, and also of a less well-known work, a drama called *Socelides*. After being pensioner at Bene't College, Cambridge, in 1591, and in 1593 becoming Bible clerk there, Fletcher finally devoted himself to the dramatic profession. We hear of him first as a dramatic author in 1607. Dryden says that it was in 1608 that Beaumont and Fletcher made their first successful joint essay in *Philaster*, but it is quite possible that they may have made previously some less successful dramatic attempts together; probably the *Woman-Hater*, brought out 1606 or 1607, was written in co-operation. Beaumont came also of a cultivated stock. His brother John, whose works are lost to posterity, must have had some claim to fame, for he earned by his poems the commendation of Jonson, and the title of brother-poet from Drayton. His college career at Broadgate's Hall, Oxford, was short. Between 1600 and the time of his entrance into the dramatic profession, he lived as a lawyer in the Inner Temple, apparently devoting his attention more to literature than to law; but from the beginning of his

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partnership with Fletcher till his marriage in 1613, he lived with his friend in the same house on the bank of the Thames, the two sharing everything in common, "even the same clothes and cloak," and showing, as a contemporary observes, a wonderful "consimilarity" of fancy. Even in their personality they were confused by their contemporaries, at least so we gather from the indiscriminate criticism which is bestowed upon them. Shirley says "they were upon every occasion as fluent to talk as a comedy." Beaumont later became glorified by that burst of regretful praise which always surrounds the man of promise who dies young; but of Fletcher, who survived his friend many years, we have details given in a calmer and more trustworthy spirit. He was, we are told, remarkable for a certain sympathetic social tact, which prevented him through life from making a single enemy; he had a genuine friendship with one in whom he might easily have found an aggressive rival: Ben Jonson was proud to call Fletcher his son, and swore—and this was indeed high praise from the egoistic dramatist—that Fletcher had outdone his great self. It must have been the extreme modesty of Fletcher that allowed him to be a friend of the great stage-reformer; and, indeed, his contemporaries bear testimony to his genuine modesty, though sometimes he forgot self in the artist's enthusiasm, on one occasion unconsciously joining in the applause which "that rare issue of his brain," the *Wild Goose Chase*, called forth. But this little outburst was no more the result of self-consciousness or egotism, than were those feelings which in more unfortunate circumstances prompted Charles Lamb to join in the hiss which banished his comedy from the stage. And so Fletcher was called Jonson's son and remained his friend; while Beaumont, who perhaps had more self-assertion than was agreeable to the great egoist, was severely criticised by him. "Francis Beaumont," he said, "thinks too much of himself and his own poems."

Thirty-six plays were written by Fletcher alone: fourteen others were probably written by Beaumont and Fletcher together. Fletcher lived nine years after Beaumont; Beaumont dying in 1616, and Fletcher in 1625, and this, in addition to the fact that Fletcher was the most rapid writer, accounts for the many plays that we have written by Fletcher alone. No fundamental differences can be discerned between these two groups of plays. We find the same pathos, the same tragedy, the same sweet and devoted characters in the plays written by Fletcher alone, as in those he wrote with Beaumont: the verse is characterised by the same qualities, sweetness, simplicity, and delicacy. Both use

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feminine endings largely; they frequently added an eleventh syllable; and, as Mr. Stopford Brooke says, they made dramatic verse weaker in proportion as they made it more sweet and delicate. However, in the hands of these two artists, in expressing the rather overwrought and uncontrolled tender feelings and emotions with which they dealt, it could be charming because it was suitable, but in the hands of degenerate disciples it became weak and insipid: the innovation they made was a bad precedent for a declining school. These tendencies were perhaps more exaggerated by Fletcher than by Beaumont: he makes very frequent use of the feminine ending, his lines often end with one, sometimes with two, unaccented syllables. "He frequently breaks up the iambic feet of his lines into tribrachs, *i.e.* he uses three-syllabled instead of two-syllabled feet," thus occasionally sacrificing firmness to sweetness,—a sacrifice which, however, is sometimes admirable, as in *The Pilgrim*—

> "How sweet these solitary places are, how wantonly
> The wind blows through the leaves and courts and plays with 'em."

Fletcher's wonderful power of expression, his management of sweet and delicate verses, have suggested comparison of him with Shelley. But the resemblance is only in form. Fletcher has not the spirituality, the refined ideal mind, of Shelley. Fletcher has no aspirations—no comprehension of the larger and impersonal enthusiasm that animates Shelley's poetry. Shelley is ennobling and powerful, where Fletcher is merely graceful and insinuating. Their point of view was so different that, although they possessed the same knack of handling verse, yet the resemblance between them must always remain superficial. Fletcher has none of the depth of Shelley: what thrills Shelley as a profound grief would touch Fletcher with artistic pathos. The feelings that animate Shelley's dirge, the cry of profound despair and sorrow that calls to the "rough wind that moanest loud," to wail for the world's wrong, could not be understood by Fletcher. Sorrow and pathos and despair were to him picturesque attributes, the material of the artist: he never felt, never conceived or imagined, that there could be "a grief too sad for song." To him madness is the only refuge of those whom the world treats cruelly,—the unconsciousness of the spirit that has shaken off its sanity, its sense of responsibility to the world around: of the sufferings and joys and experiences of deep self-contained natures Fletcher understood nothing. "Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy," he says in the lyric which has

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the credit of perhaps suggesting to Milton his *Il Penseroso*, that poem of so much deeper significance—

> "There's nought in this life sweet
> If man were wise to see it,
> But only melancholy,
> Sweetest melancholy."

The wrongs and misfortunes of the world resolve themselves into the pathos, sometimes rather querulous, of souls who have been disappointed and deceived in their hopes; into the picturesque complaints of the disappointed lover, of the deceived maiden, the mad despair of the thwarted.

Beautiful as are many of the passages in which Fletcher's heroes and heroines bewail their unhappy lot, yet they cannot give him a claim to that depth and dignity either of thought or expression which always characterises the greatest poets and artists, and thus there must ever be the widest gulf between Fletcher and Shelley. Mr. Matthew Arnold cautions the student of literature against that too wide toleration that may come with culture: against admiration that lowers unconsciously its standard; being impressed by beauty everywhere, forgetting to compare and adjust; that is carried uncritically away into the atmosphere of the smaller artists, forgetting that it has ever been in the larger world and seen with the deeper insight of the great artist. And never is this caution more needed than in reading Beaumont and Fletcher: so great is their power of taking us into their atmosphere, so great their power of interesting us in the story and fate of their picturesque characters, in making us forget how limited, sometimes how debased, are their little loves, their small sphere of hopes and fears. We must never forget that, charming as they are, and picturesque as their point of view often is, their verse has never the true ring of that of the greatest artists. Neither of them could have understood or expressed the spirit that speaks through the dying Hamlet to Horatio, in which is concentrated all the tragedy of the whole episode, and the profound self-contained misery of Hamlet's soul—

> "If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
> To tell my story."

Beaumont and Fletcher had no doubt their finer moments, when the higher aspects of life came before them and seemed admirable, but if the deep insight of the true artist had been

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consistently theirs, they could never have written such low, degraded plays, they could never have imagined so many sordid and miserable characters. They were not true to their best moments; but at times goodness, purity, and honesty seemed to them what was most admirable in life. Some of Fletcher's most vigorous verses were those in which he speaks of the true manliness, the "virtus," which meant so much in earlier Elizabethan days, the ideal of the true "gentle-man" that had passed away,—of Sir Philip Sidney and his generation. In *Nice Valour* his Duke says—

> "I cannot make you gentlemen, that's a work
> Raised from your own deservings; merit, manners,
> And inborn virtue does it: let your own goodness
> Make you so great, my power shall make you greater."

And the poem at the end of the comedy *Upon an Honest Man's Fortune* is the genuine vigorous expression of his sense of the dignity of human independence, of the weight of human responsibility—

> "Man is his own star, and the soul that can
> Be honest is the only perfect man:
> Commands all light, all influence, all fate:
> Nothing to him falls early or too late:
> Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
> Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

He could conceive, but not sustain, the somewhat nobly eccentric character of Valentine in *Wit without Money*, who holds it monstrous men should feed their bodies and starve their understandings.

One of Fletcher's greatest failures is a play in which he attempts to draw a thoroughly and consistently noble character: his failure in this play, called *The Loyal Subject*, is made more evident by the comparison that is naturally suggested between it and Heywood's *Royal King and Loyal Subject*. The exaggerated virtue of Ordella in *Thierry and Theodoret*, a play which he wrote in conjunction with Beaumont, awakens no interest: it is an instance, though one not taken by Charles Lamb, who finds interest in the character of Ordella, of "a flight of overstrained and improbable virtue, which betrays an imperfect moral sensibility."

Morality and virtue are picturesque attributes which sometimes have their reward: for instance, in the *Maid of the Mill*, a play in which Rowley had some part, the maid who is true to her idea of duty has the same reward that Richardson gives to Pamela, viz. that of marrying the man who has done all he can

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to turn her from it. This is the distorted idea of poetic justice which he shared with the excellent novelist: but he has a sincere regard for innocence and purity: they are some of the elements of beauty, as in Viola and Honora, two characters in *The Loyal Subject*—

> "What a modesty dwells round about 'em,
> And like a nipping morn pulls in their blossoms."

And in the *Elder Brother*—

> "Andrew, she has a face looks like a story,
> The story of the heavens looks very like her."

It gives dignity to Celia in the *Custom of the Country*—

> "I cannot love you,
> Without the breach of faith, I cannot hear you,
> You hang upon my love like frosts on lilies;
> I can die, but I cannot love—
> You are answered."

But with the exception of a few fine touches of this kind, Fletcher is out of his sphere when he ventures to conceive an ideally pure or noble person. They are unnatural and stiff: his efforts remind one of those of the typical French novelist, who is a genius if he keep within the sphere of what is apparently his own unfortunate experience, who shows talent in his conception and treatment of the character of the complex and civilised villain, but is altogether at a loss when he wishes to rise to a purer sphere. He cannot conceive goodness save as the result of ignorance, and his good people are, without exception, crude, unnatural, and wearisome.

But Fletcher shares with the French novelist the sense of the artistic value of the nobler attributes of human nature in certain crises of life. He has never made any study of a consistently noble character, but experience has doubtless made him thrill in response at moments when men have shown true nobility and dignity, and those rarer, higher impulses of human nature which even the worst life cannot utterly destroy. Charles Lamb gives a scene from the *Tragedy of Bonduca* which suggests even Shakspere in the dignity of its thought and expression. Bonduca is triumphing over the Romans, whom she has just defeated—

> "A woman beat them, Nennius; a weak woman,
> A woman, beat these Romans!"

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Caratach, whom Fletcher, in defiance of history, makes the hero of the episode of the tragedy, checks her. "So it seems," he says—

> "A man would shame to talk so.
> . . . . . .
> 'Tis a truth
> That Rome has fled before us twice, and routed;
> A truth we ought to crown the gods for, lady,
> And not our tongues."

If Bonduca think so meanly of the Romans, why does she so glory in her conquest?—

> "Ye, all ye Romans, fearful, fleeing Romans,
> . . . . . .
> Where is your conquest then?
> Why are your altars crown'd with wreaths of flowers?
> The beasts with gilt horns waiting for the fire?
> The holy Druides composing songs
> Of everlasting life to victory?
> . . . . . .
> *Bonduca.* By the gods, I think
> Ye dote upon these Romans, Caratach.
> *Caratach.* Witness these wounds, I do; they were fairly given:
> I love an enemy; I was born a soldier;
> . . . Ten struck battles
> I suck'd these honour'd scars from, and all Roman;
> Ten years of bitter nights and heavy marches,
> When many a frozen storm sung through my cuirass
> (And made it doubtful whether that or I
> Were the more stubborn metal) have I wrought through,
> And all to try these Romans. Ten times a night
> I have swum the rivers, when the stars of Rome
> Shot at me as I floated, and the billows
> Tumbled their wat'ry ruins on my shoulders,
> Charging my batter'd side with troops of agues;
> And still to try these Romans."

He has seen the Britons run before them—

> "Not a lover's wish
> E'er made the haste they did.
> . . . The light shadows
> That in a thought scur o'er the fields of corn,
> Halted on crutches to them."

This is surely vigorous and dignified verse, showing that Fletcher had conceptions of noble impulse and character. But sometimes we find him, with characteristic carelessness of any standard, either moral or artistic, spoiling a fine plot by his own coarse

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additions—as, for instance, in the *Custom of the Country*. The original episode is that of a mother who will not violate hospitality by betraying the murderer of her son; but Fletcher so misunderstands the spirit of the story as to make her ultimately marry the murderer.

A want of artistic self-control sometimes renders his plays either painful or ridiculous—painful, as in *A Wife for a Month*, in the outcries of the poisoned Alphonsus; ridiculous, as in the *Mad Lover*, a warrior madly in love with the Princess Celia, and who wishes literally to obey her wish and to leave his heart in her hand: he does indeed, as one of the characters observes, go "stupid mad." But there is pathos in the sad subdued madness of the gaoler's daughter in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, Fletcher's addition to this play, which he wrote in conjunction with Shakspere, borrowing the plot from Chaucer's knight's tale. She is in love with Palamon, of whom her father is in charge. Like Ophelia, and like all blighted maidens of her time, she wanders alone in the country, and would drown herself did not her courage fail her. She longs "to go to the place of the blessed spirits, where are we maids that have our hearts perish'd, crack'd to pieces with love: we shall come there and do nothing all day long but pick flowers with Proserpine."

Fletcher has to a certain limited extent the gift of comic characterisation. There is humour in the conception of the character of the old gentleman in *The Pilgrim*, who appears quite sane till a storm at sea suddenly reveals the fact that he thinks he is Neptune. There is humour in the character of the lawyer in *The Spanish Curate*, who evidently regarded truth as too sacred to be used on ordinary occasions. "I must have witnesses," he says, "enough and ready"—

> "Substantial, fearless souls, that will swear suddenly,
> That will swear anything.
> *Clerk.* They shall swear truth too.
> *L.* That's no great matter: for variety
> They may swear truth."

Fletcher can not only tell a story, effectively bringing out its dramatic points, but he can give us also the atmosphere of his story, and make a living background for his personages. "In *The Pilgrim*," says Ward, "we are in an atmosphere of southern romance—pilgrims, brigands, woods, and streams reproduced with easy naturalness:" he shows the capacity for realising the

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historic past, as in the *Tragedy of Bonduca*. He has the historic spirit, though not the historic devotion to facts, for the episodes he makes most of in this tragedy are but imaginative developments of hints given by Tacitus; for instance, he develops the fate of the Roman officer Poenius, slightly touched on by Tacitus, into a number of striking scenes. And lastly, the *Wild Goose Chase* shows him to be a master in the art of conducting brilliant chatter; it is an instance of the truth of Dryden's criticism, enunciated with eighteenth-century pomposity and decision—

> "In witty dialogue is Fletcher's praise—
> He moved the mind, but had not power to raise."

In the *Faithful Shepherdess* he displays strikingly the power of moving the mind by the sweetness of his diction alone, "by the sweet expression accompanied by sweet conceit . . . the familiar language fashioned to the weight . . . of shepherds and the shepherdesses who speak it."

The Faithful Shepherdess is Fletcher's masterpiece from the point of view of diction; but it is absolutely valueless from that of characterisation or plot. It is thoroughly conventional in idea and treatment. Fletcher makes no attempt to emancipate himself from the conventionality of the pastoral. His pastoral, as he says, "is a representation of shepherds and shepherdesses with their actions and passions, which must be such as may agree with their nature, at least not exceeding former fictions and vulgar traditions. They are not to be adorned with any but such improper (*i.e.* not confined to the common) ones as nature is said to bestow, such as singing and poetry, or such as experience may teach them, as the virtues of herbs and fountains, the ordinary course of the sun, moon, and stars, and the like." He makes no attempt to introduce any more vigorous or robust element; he makes no attempt to give it a healthy reality, as Ben Jonson had done by connecting it with national legend; but the simplicity, and purity and sweetness of his diction, allowed the pastoral in his hands to come very near, in expression at least, to the ideal of rural and idyllic poetry, though a man of his temperament and ideas could never have that enthusiasm and reverence for Nature, that devotion to her as the one worthy inspiration of life, which is the motive of the true pastoral poet. The slender thread of plot that binds the monotonous incidents of the conventional pastoral life together is in this case the loves of Amoret, the faithful shepherdess, and Perigot; a love which Amaryllis, another shepherdess, who herself is in love with

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Perigot, endeavours to trouble and ruin. Over the whole conduct of the action reigns Clorin, a holy shepherdess, the embodiment of purity and constancy: she appears in the first scene as having buried her dead love and vowing eternal fidelity over his grave. She is loved for her constancy and purity by Thenot: he is devoted to her for the sake of these qualities, and she loses for him her charm and attraction when, in pity for his love-lorn condition, she pretends to respond to his love and to be faithless to her dead shepherd. Connected with the plot, though by no means inwoven in it, are the characters of a bad shepherd, Alexis, and a bad shepherdess, Chloe, together with incidents of their uncalled-for career. They are both, as Charles Lamb says, moral and artistic blots. Other personages in this pastoral world are a priest of Pan, a river-god, a satyr sent by Pan to direct the wandering shepherds aright, and who bears the same relation to the plot of Fletcher's play as the attendant spirit does to that of Milton's *Comus*. There is in the piece no plot, no characterisation, no significance,—yet the *Faithful Shepherdess* will always be one of the honoured English classics, because of the almost perfect grace of some of its diction and the charm of its lyrics. Here and there, in the troubled course of the true love of Amoret and Perigot, there are passages of true poetic feeling,—the cry of Amoret, when she sees herself doubted by Perigot—

> "Let me be made a reed and ever mute
> Nod to the water's fall, while every blast
> Sings thro' my slender leaves that I was chaste;"

in Perigot's grief when he thinks he can no longer believe in the truth and fidelity of Amoret—

> "Night, do not steal away! I woo thee yet
> To hold a hard hand o'er the rusty bit
> That guides the lazy team. Go back again,
> Boötes, thou that drivest the frozen wain
> Round as a ring, and bring a second night
> To hide my sorrow from the coming light;"

in Thenot's address to the polar star, which in its cold bright distant light brings back to him the memory of his shepherdess—

> "Thou blessed star, I thank thee for thy light,
> Thou by whose power the darkness of sad night
> Is banish'd from the earth, in whose dull place
> Thy chaster beams play on the heavy face

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Of all the world, making the blue sea smile
To see how cunningly thou dost beguile
Thy brother of his brightness, giving day
Again from chaos: whiter than that way
That leads to Jove's high court, and chaster far
Than chastity itself."

These two last passages, by their greater elaborateness, not quite consistent with the spirit of the pastoral, suggest that significant and stately creation of Milton's, for which Fletcher's pastoral is supposed to have afforded hints and suggestions. "The lazy team of Boötes" is, in Milton's *Comus*, the

"drowsy flight'd steeds,
That draw the litter of close-curtain'd sleep."

But if, in stately imagery, in more dignified verse, Milton is Fletcher's successful rival, yet in the poetry, which is essentially the poetry of pastoral art,—in simple, sweet, and spontaneous verse,—Fletcher far surpasses Milton.

The song of the satyr, bearing the wounded Alexis—

"Softly gliding as I go
With this burden full of woe
Thro' still silence of the night
Guided by the glow-worm's light,
Hither am I come at last.
Many a thicket have I passed;
Not a twig that durst deny me,
Not a bush that durst descry me,
To the little bird that sleeps
On the tender spray: nor creeps
That hardy worm with pointed tail
But if I be under sail,
Flying faster than the wind,
Leaving all the clouds behind,
But doth hide her tender head
In some hollow tree or bed
Of seeded nettles; not a hare
Can be started from his fare
By my footing; nor a wish
Is more sudden, nor a fish
Can be found with greater ease,
Cut the vast unbounded seas,
Leaving neither print nor sound,
Than I, when nimbly on the ground
I measure many a league an hour;"

the song of the priest, the warning to fold the flocks, that night is coming—

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"See the dewdrops how they kiss
Every little flower that is
Hanging on their velvet heads
Like a rope of crystal beads;"

the song of the river-god, who saves the wounded Amoret, thrown into his spring—

"Fear not him that succour'd thee,
I am this fountain's god! Below
My waters to a river grow,
And 'twixt two banks with osiers set,
That only prosper in the wet,
Thro' the meadows do they glide,
Wheeling still on every side,
Sometimes winding round about,
To find the evenest channel out.
And if thou wilt go with me,
Leaving mortal company,
In the cool stream shalt thou lie
Free from harm as well as I:
I will give thee for thy food
No fish that useth in the mud;
But trout and pike, that love to swim
Where the gravel from the brim
Thro' the pure streams may be seen:
Orient pearl fit for a queen,
Will I give, thy love to win,
And a shell to keep them in."

. . . . .

Amoret's reply. "For thy kindness to me shown,
Never from thy banks be blown
Any tree, with windy force,
Cross thy streams, to stop thy course
May no beast that comes to drink,
With his horns cast down thy brink
May none that for thy fish do look
Cut thy banks to dam thy brook:
Barefoot may no neighbour wade
In thy cool streams, wife or maid
When the spawn on stones do lie
To wash their hemp, and spoil the fry."—

are all pieces of verse which are admirably fitted to express the true idea of the pastoral.

This verse has indeed none of the dignity and stateliness of Milton's pastoral verse, none of the solemn, appealing tone as in the address to Sabrina, daughter of Locrine—

"Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,

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In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-coloured hair;
Listen for dear honour's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save."

There is none of the almost oriental splendour of Sabrina's song of her dwelling—

"Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of Turkis blue, and emerald green."

Of the spirit's song to Sabrina—

"May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon."

And there may perhaps be more absolute beauty in Milton's verse, but if we take into consideration the ideal of the pastoral, and the fitness and adaptability of Fletcher's verse to this form of art, we must feel that the *Faithful Shepherdess*, as far as the execution is concerned, is a triumph of pastoral art. Milton is too splendid: and his verse, when it is not loaded with gorgeous imagery, is too weighty with meaning: it is not adapted to a form of art which aims both in thought and expression at simplicity and sweetness.

The Tragedy of Thierry, King of France, and of his brother Theodoret, it is impossible to assign definitely either to Fletcher alone or to Beaumont and Fletcher working together. "Fletcher's hand," says Mr. Ward, "is visible in the versification . . . upon the whole I should be inclined to follow Dyce in regarding Dailey's view as not improbable, according to which *Thierry and Theodoret*, though not brought out till after Beaumont's death, may have been planned, and partly or wholly written, with his co-operation before." Whatever be the nature of its authorship this play contains one of the finest scenes that distinguish the drama of Beaumont and Fletcher, a scene that has all the distinctive merits of the later Elizabethan drama, deep feeling, and an intense pathos, which rise successfully above the horrors and exaggerations of coarse and uninteresting plot. Brunhalt, the Queen of Austrasia, whose wickedness is as overdrawn and unnatural as is the goodness and innocence of Ordella, the wife of Thierry, having poisoned her husband in

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order to keep the government in her hands, finds it necessary to remove her sons Thierry and Theodoret, who have grown up to be obstacles to her ambition; she irritates Thierry against Theodoret till the quarrel becomes violent, and Thierry kills Theodoret. Brunhalt then poisons Thierry. It is his dying speech, which is so powerful in its mixture of agony and pathos—

> "Tell me,
> Can ever these eyes more, shut up in slumbers,
> Assure my soul there is sleep? Is there night
> And rest for human labours? Do not you
> And all the world, as I do, outstare Time,
> And live, like funeral lamps, never extinguish'd?
> Is there a grave? and in that grave
> Is there a hope I shall sleep? Can I die?
> Are not my miseries immortal? oh!
> The happiness of him that drinks his water,
> After the weary day, and sleeps for ever!
> Why do you crucify me thus with faces,
> And gaping strangely upon one another;
> When shall I rest?
> . . . . . .
> Well, I will die,
> In spite of all your potions! one of you sleep;
> Lie down and sleep here, that I may behold
> What blessed rest it is my eyes are robb'd of!—
> See; he can sleep, sleep anywhere, sleep now,
> When he that wakes for him can never slumber!
> Is it not a dainty ease?
> *Doctor.* Your grace shall feel it.
> *Thierry.* O never, never I! the eyes of heaven
> See but their certain motions, and then sleep:
> The rages of the ocean have their slumbers,
> And quiet silver calms: each violence
> Crowns in his end a peace: but my fixed fires
> Shall never, never set!"

And he turns to his mother—

> "O, mother, do not lose your name! forget not
> This touch of nature in your tenderness!
> 'Tis all the soul of woman, all the sweetness:
> Forget not, I beseech you, what are children,
> How you have groaned for them; to what love
> They are born inheritors, with what care kept;
> And, as they are rife to ripeness, still remember
> How they imp out your age! and when Time calls you,
> That as an autumn flower you fall, forget not
> How round about your hearse they hang, like pennons."

Philaster, or Love Lies Bleeding, written by both Beaumont and Fletcher, seems to have been the most popular of their plays.

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The plot turns on an incident which always excited and interested an audience of those days. Euphrasia, daughter of Dion, a nobleman at the court of the King of Sicily, disguises herself as a page in order to devote herself to Philaster. "Our ancestors," says Charles Lamb, "seem to have been wonderfully delighted by these transformations of sex." Later there came in a reaction against this fancy, so romantic and generally so successful in idea, so hazardous and unpleasing in practice. We find the poet Donne dissuading his mistress from a resolution she had taken, apparently stimulated by plays, to follow him abroad as a page.

> "Temper, O fair love, love's impetuous rage,
> Be my true mistress: not my feigned page."

Euphrasia, as the page Bellario, is a very good specimen of Beaumont and Fletcher's ideal of womanhood. She is tender, faithful, and devoted to Philaster, with a devotion which suffices for itself and craves no return. Indeed, as Mr. Ward remarks, it is unpleasing to find that at the end of the play the sweet and pathetic Euphrasia is left uncared for. She has served Philaster patiently and devotedly; she knows that Philaster loves Arethusa, daughter of the king, and she helps him in his love by becoming page to Arethusa, and carrying secretly his messages and tokens; for their intercourse is obliged to be concealed, because Philaster is hated and suspected at court as being the rightful king unjustly excluded; and Arethusa, to further her father's ambitious plans, is to be betrothed to the Spanish prince. The self-sacrifice of love can go no further, and when by a just revolution Philaster is placed on the throne and openly betrothed to Arethusa, and the patient Euphrasia is left desolate, it is felt that poetic justice has been violated. It is the sweet, simple, and devoted character of Euphrasia that makes the spirit of the play and characterises the best of its diction, which is remarkable for an extreme simplicity, sometimes mixed with a quiet pathos, such as that which dignifies Euphrasia's answer to Philaster—

> "Oh, but thou dost not know
> What 'tis to die.
>
> "Yes, I do know, my lord;
> 'Tis less than to be born: a lasting sleep;
> A quiet resting from all jealousy;
> A thing we all pursue. I know, besides,
> It is but giving over of a game
> That must be lost."

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Sometimes the verse has the idyllic sweetness and freshness of the pastoral, as when Philaster tells the princess Arethusa how he first found the boy Bellario—

> "I have a boy, sent by the gods,
> Not yet seen in the court. Hunting the buck,
> I found him sitting by the fountain side,
> Of which he borrow'd some to quench his thirst,
> And paid the nymph again as much in tears.
> A garland lay him by, made by himself,
> Of many flowers, bred in the bay,
> Stuck in that mystic order, that the rareness
> Delighted me: but ever when he turn'd
> His tender eyes upon them he would weep,
> As if he meant to make them grow again.
> Seeing such pretty helpless innocence
> Dwell in his face, I ask'd him all his story.
> He told me that his parents gentle died,
> Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,
> Which gave him roots: and of the crystal springs,
> Which did not stop their courses: and the sun,
> Which still, he thank'd him, yielded him his light.
> Then took he up his garland, and did show
> What every flower, as country people hold,
> Did signify; and how all order'd thus,
> Express'd his grief: and, to my thoughts, did read
> The prettiest lecture of his country art
> That could be wish'd, so that, methought, I could
> Have studied it. I gladly entertain'd him,
> Who was as glad to follow: and have got
> The trustiest, loving'st, and the gentlest boy,
> That ever master kept. Him will I send
> To wait on you, and bear our hidden love."

But it is the *Maid's Tragedy* which, from among all the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, should be singled out as not only showing the genius of these two artists at its height, but as embodying, in the conception of some of its characters and in their expression, what is most distinctive of, and most beautiful in, the later Elizabethan drama. In some of the speeches of Aspatia there is all the wild pathetic passion of the self-devoted woman, the feminine ideal of the later Elizabethans, who has been deceived and wronged, but whose love cannot be shaken; and the words of Evadne, the second heroine of the play, are animated by that sterner and bitterer spirit, a feeling of horror and remorse, at the wreck that passion uncontrolled could make of life. Aspatia has been betrothed to Amintor, but the king desiring him to marry Evadne, he breaks his promise to Aspatia and marries Evadne. The character of Amintor is hopelessly weak

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and contemptible. Amintor is supposed to obey his sovereign's demand as divine law. Such a servile character of a hero could then only have been drawn by "high-flying passive-obedience Tories." In the early Elizabethan days, when there was an ideal halo surrounding the royal head, such behaviour might have been understood. But no such chivalrous feeling animated either the theory or the practice of the courtiers of James I., loyalty meant utter and undignified servility; and Amintor's exceeding pliability, his forgetfulness of Aspatia, his delight in Evadne, in obedience to the royal command, give him no claim to human dignity and respect. We generally find him suffering all the horrors of a weak remorse for the crimes which his excessive obedience had caused him to commit. It detracts from the impressiveness of Aspatia's sorrow to know that he was the cause of it, and the object of her love. Aspatia is first introduced to us as the ordinary love-sick maiden, delighting in tears and solitude, and melancholy fancies—

> "This lady
> Walks discontented, with her watery eyes
> Bent on the earth. The unfrequented woods
> Are her delight: and when she sees a bank
> Stuck full of flowers, she with a sigh will tell
> Her servants what a pretty place it were
> To bury lovers in; and make her maids
> Pluck them, and strew her over like a corse.
> She carries with her an infectious grief,
> That strikes all her beholders; she will sing
> The mournful'st things that ever ear hath heard
> And sigh and sing again; and when the rest
> Of our young ladies, in their wanton blood,
> Tell mirthful tales in course, that fill the room
> With laughter, she will, with so sad a look,
> Bring forth a story of the silent death
> Of some forsaken virgin, which her grief
> Will put in such a phrase, that, ere she end,
> She'll send them weeping, one by one, away."

It is Aspatia who speaks the lines which have become so well known as a little ballad of forsaken love—

> "Lay a garland on my hearse
> Of the dismal yew;
> Maidens, willow branches bear;
> Say I died true.
>
> "My love was false, but I was firm
> From my hour of birth.
> Upon my buried body lie,
> Lightly, gentle earth!"

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But Aspatia is most truly impressive and touching in the scene where she sits surrounded by her maidens. She wishes them to be sad, because she is so—

"Come, let's be sad, my girls!
That downcast of thine eye, Olympia,
Shows a fine sorrow. Mark, Antiphila;
Just such another was the nymph Œnone,
When Paris brought home Helen. Now a tear;
And then thou art a piece expressing fully
The Carthage queen, when, from a cold sea rock,
Full with her sorrow, she tied fast her eyes
To the fair Trojan ships; and, having lost them,
Just as thine eyes do, down stole a tear. Antiphila,
What would this wench do, if she were Aspatia?
Here she would stand, till some more pitying god
Turn'd her to marble! 'Tis enough, my wench!
Show me the piece of needlework you wrought.

Antiphila. Of Ariadne, madam?

Asp. Yes, that piece.—
This should be Theseus; he has a cozening face:
You meant him for a man?

Ant. He was so, madam.

Asp. Why, then, 'tis well enough. Never look back:
You have a full wind, and a false heart, Theseus!
Does not the story say, his keel was split,
Or his masts spent, or some kind rock or other
Met with his vessel?

Ant. Not as I remember.

Asp. It should have been so; could the gods know this,
And not, of all their number, raise a storm?
But they are all as ill. This false smile was well express'd,
Just such another caught me; you shall not go so, Antiphila,
In this place work a quicksand
And over it a shallow smiling water,
And his ship ploughing it, and then a Fear.
Do that Fear to the life, wench.

Ant. 'Twill wrong the story.

Asp. 'Twill make the story, wrong'd by wanton poets,
Live long and be believed; but where's the lady?

Ant. There, madam.

Asp. Fie! you have miss'd it here, Antiphila,
You are much mistaken, wench;
These colours are not dull and pale enough,
To show a soul so full of misery
As this sad lady's was;"

And then in lines which are the finest that Beaumont and Fletcher ever wrote, which breathe all the sorrow and despair of a passionate and forsaken soul, she tells her maidens to look at her for the model of deserted Ariadne—

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"Do it by me,
Do it by me the lost Aspatia,
And you shall find all true but the wild island.
I stand upon the sea-beach now, and think
Mine arms thus, and mine hair blown with the wind,
Wild as that desert, and let all about me
Tell that I am forsaken, do my face
(If ever thou hadst feeling of a sorrow)
Thus, thus, Antiphila, strive to make me look
Like Sorrow's monument; and the trees about me,
Let them be dry and leafless; let the rocks
Groan with continual surges, and, behind me,
Make all a desolation."

The finest words of Evadne, the second heroine of the play, are somewhat marred as being called forth by the reproaches of Amintor, who weakly accuses her of having been false to him. "Thou has brought me," he says,

"to that dull calamity,
To that strange misbelief of all the world,
And all things that are in it, that I fear
I shall fall like a tree, and find a grave,
Only remembering that I grieve."

Evadne's true remorse gives her more dignity in her self-reproach than Amintor, "the noble youth, the soul as white as heaven," could ever possess. "I am soul-sick," she says,

"And wither with the fear of one condemn'd
Till I have got your pardon."

And when Amintor offers her his forgiveness and future trust, she says—

"I have done nothing good to win belief,
My life hath been so faithless. All the creatures,
Made for heaven's honours, have their ends, and good ones,
All but the cozening crocodiles, false women!
They reign here like those plagues, those killing sores,
Men pray against; and when they die, like tales
Ill-told and unbelieved, they pass away,
And go to dust forgotten! but, my lord,
These short days I shall number to my rest
. . . shall, though too late,
Though in my evening, yet perceive a will;
Since I can do no good, because a woman,
Reach constantly at something that is near it.
I will redeem one minute of my age,
Or like another Niobe, I'll weep
Till I am water."

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The readers of the *Maid's Tragedy* and of *Philaster* cannot doubt that Beaumont and Fletcher's work is often animated by real and true feeling, sometimes finding splendid expression. And we have proof of their capacity for humour in the play of the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, probably a joint composition, though some critics would assign it to Fletcher alone. It is a very clever parody on the heroic dramas and tales of the past age, probably suggested by Don Quixote. Its satire had also a second and more immediate point, as being directed against the military ardour of the city trainbands. For this reason it was probably not very well received at first, when the military talent of the citizens of London was struggling and unrecognised; but at the Restoration, after an interval, in which the city trainbands had established their reputation in the civil war, its ridicule could be harmless and amusing. The Knight of the Burning Pestle is Ralph, apprentice to a citizen grocer. He has read many novels, among others *Palmerin of England*, and is fired with a desire for adventure and chivalrous experiences. To his attendant apprentices, he says, "My beloved squire, and George my dwarf, I charge you that from henceforth you never call me by any other name but the right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle: and that you never call any female by the name of woman or wench, but fair lady, if she have her desires; if not, distressed damsel: that you call all forests and heaths deserts, and all horses palfreys."

He is fortunate to meet with a "distressed damsel" at the very outset of his travels, and he then proceeds to take a tremendous oath—

> "My trusty dwarf and friend, reach me my shield,
> And hold it while I swear first by my knighthood,
> Then by the soul of Amadis de Gaul
> (My famous ancestor); then by my sword,
> The beauteous Brionella girt about me,
> By this bright burning pestle, of mine honour
> The living trophy, and by all respect
> Due to distressed damsels: here I vow
> Never to end the quest of this fair lady
> And that forsaken squire, till by my valour
> I gain their liberty."

No material inconvenience can check his chivalrous spirit and his belief in a fortune that favours the brave—

> "I have but one horse, upon which shall ride
> This lady fair behind me, and before

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This courteous squire. Fortune will give us more
Upon our next adventure."

And how a determined imagination can cast a glamour over the trivialities of life is shown by the aspect in which the barber presents himself to Ralph and the excited host—

"Not far from hence, near to a craggy cliff,
At the north end of this distracted town,
There doth stand a lowly house
Ruggedly builded, and in it a cave
In which an ugly giant now doth won (dwell)
Ycleped Barbarossa: in his hand
He shakes a naked lance of purest steel,
With sleeves turn'd up: and him before he wears
A motley garment to preserve his clothes
From blood of those knights which he massacres
And ladies' gent; without the door doth hang
A copper bason, on a prickant spear;
At which no sooner gentle knight can knock
But the shrill sound fierce Barbarossa hears,
And rushing forth brings in the errant knight,
And sets him down in an enchanted chair;
Then with an engine which he hath prepared
With forty teeth, he claws his courtly crown;
Next makes him wink, and underneath his chin
He plants a brazen piece, of mighty bore,
And knocks his bullets round about his cheeks;
Whilst with his fingers and an instrument
With which he snaps his hair off, he doth fill
The wretch's ears with a most hideous noise."

And not only have Beaumont and Fletcher in the play parodied the heroic ardour and valour of chivalrous novels and dramas,—Ralph's first speech is a parody on a passage in Shakspere's *Henry IV.*, Act i. Scene 1, his last a parody on the opening speech of the ghost of Andrea in the *Spanish Tragedy*,—but they have carried their impartiality to an heroic extent and have parodied themselves. Luce, who believes in Jasper through everything, is hardly distinguishable from many of the heroines of their other plays, who sacrifice everything to love; devoting themselves, without reward or hope, even when they have ceased to believe in those they love. The gift of humour would be a dangerous one to men like Beaumont and Fletcher, sceptical as they naturally were concerning the deeper feelings and meanings of life. Happily the age did not call for that cynical laughter which plays over everything and which finds nothing sacred. This was the spirit of the stage after the

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Restoration, but before there was still some memory left of the serious and deep feelings of the best Elizabethan time Parodies and the jeer of scepticism amused, but the age had belief still in the reality of some of its emotions, and it required that its dramatists should be "reverent in the right place."

It was Beaumont and Fletcher's perfect agreement with their age that explains their popularity. It was the public which gave them the mould within which they readily worked and shaped their genius. Their capacity in supplying an insatiable public with new plots is remarkable. The sources of their plots were Italian novels, Spanish novels and plays; the acquaintance of which they made through translations, probably getting to know the Spanish drama only through the novels from which its plots were drawn. The resemblance that has been observed between Beaumont and Fletcher and Lope de Vega, came thus from no personal literary intercourse: the resemblance is sufficiently explained by noticing the similarity of the national life of both Spain and England at that time, and the similar position of Lope de Vega and Beaumont and Fletcher, all being artists, whose sole aim, beyond the desire to write, was to please the public taste.

The plots of many of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays are quite outside the pale, as far as modern standards are concerned, but their power of effectively telling a story, of dramatising an episode in order to give adequate effect to the most important incidents, cannot be over praised. Mr. Craik says: "In the conduct of a story for the mere purposes of the stage,—for keeping the attention of an audience awake, and their expectation suspended throughout the whole course of the action,—they excel Shakspere; who, aiming at higher things, and producing his more glowing pictures by fewer strokes, is careless about the mere excitement of curiosity, whereas they are tempted to linger as long as possible over every scene, both for that end, and because their proper method of evolving character and passion is by such delay and repetition of touch upon touch."

Within a limited range their power of characterisation is good, but it is of the same crude sort as Ben Jonson's,—the study of types of human nature, all more or less exaggerated in certain directions. These types occur again and again in Beaumont and Fletcher's plays,—the blunt old soldier, the patient devoted woman, etc. Indeed, characterisation of the higher sort was as impossible to Beaumont and Fletcher as it was to Jonson. Their genius was devoid of those finer perceptions and higher

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sensibilities which alone can give real deep insight into human nature, and make possible the conception and treatment of the higher and finer sorts of character. Ben Jonson failed in characterisation because his colossal egoism was an insurmountable obstacle to a sympathetic comprehension of his fellow beings: in theory he understood and sympathised with the best and noblest aspects of human nature. Beaumont and Fletcher had a thorough and spontaneous sense of human fellowship, but it was fellowship with only the lower aspects of human nature: even in theory they were incapable of sympathy and understanding with the nobler aims and qualities of humanity. "Undoubtedly," as Mr. Craik says, "taking them all in all, they have left us the richest and most magnificent drama we possess after that of Shakspere; the most instinct and alive both with the true dramatic spirit and with that of general poetic beauty and power, the most brilliantly lighted up with wit and humour:" and yet we cannot help feeling that their art, perfect as it is in its way, throws no new light on the world, makes no suggestions, opens out no new vistas, such as the greatest genius, by virtue of its wide comprehension and deep insight, unconsciously does. The work of Beaumont and Fletcher is essentially the successful work of the second-rate artist; that their fame in their own day was so great, overpowering that of Shakspere, was because they were the children of this world; and the children of this world are naturally always more popular and successful in their generation than the children of light.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE DECLINE OF THE DRAMA.

CHAPMAN, George, *b.* 1557 or 1559, *d.* 1634; HEYWOOD, Thomas, 1570-1650; MIDDLETON, Thomas, *b.* 1570, *d.* 1627; MARSTON, John, *b.* 1585, *d.* 163–; DEKKER, Thomas, *b.* 1570, *d.* 1640; WEBSTER, John, *b.* , *d.* 1650; MASSINGER, Philip, *b.* 1584, *d.* 1639; FORD, John, *b.* 1586, *d.* 1640; TOURNEUR, Cyril; SHIRLEY, James, 1596-1666.

IF we take the best work of Shakspere as marking the culminating point of Elizabethan dramatic art, the decline of the drama may be said to include the work of both Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher. Without doubt, the work of these artists shows the bad effects necessarily produced on dramatic art by the degeneration of the national life. Great and unmistakable influence on the personalities and works of these authors was exercised by the narrowness of the interests of the great collective life, by the growing division of the nation into two sections—the ascetic, thoughtful, moral, and puritan section, who despised art as the silly play of life, and called theatres the "devil's chapels;" and the unthinking, pleasure-loving, artistic cavalier section, eager for life and art, but whose energy was controlled by no serious interests, by no consciousness of great responsibilities, political or religious. In Ben Jonson we see the reactionist, a great high-minded spirit, of high standards, shocked with the immorality of his time, longing to be its teacher; showing the bad effects of his divorce from his age in the pompous-pedantic tone, the consciousness with which he enunciates sentiments, whose morality he knows will strike unpleasantly a popular audience; in the brutal coarseness of some of his plays, when contemporary manners are represented at their worst in order to point a moral. And in Beaumont and Fletcher the fatal division between national life and the life of art is still further shown. They have lost all standard of morality; everything is measured by the standard of

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the picturesque; the life with which they deal is but the limited one of the court and of the fashionable world; the study of character is but the study of manners and of exaggerated types; everywhere is visible that want of self-control which comes when life has no serious aims or interests to serve as its discipline. Beaumont and Fletcher have the vigorous, eager Elizabethan individuality; but it is demoralised by the absence of those checks which, in the early part of the Renaissance, had kept its vitality within bounds; with them passion is often mere vehemence, enthusiasm; and the desire for liberty mere wantonness. But Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher stand out from among the artists of their time, because they possess each a little share of that great genius which can give vigour and life to whatever it touches.

Under the school, therefore, of "Decline of the Drama" we must include all those lesser spirits who exhibit strikingly all the characteristics of a declining art—of an art that has no firm root in national life, and yet that shows no tendency to seek for itself an artificial life on its own conditions,—to become a literary drama pure and simple, like that of the German Romanticists under Tieck. Such a drama is represented by men such as Chapman, Ford, and Webster—men of sufficient ability to claim a high rank among dramatists; and by the very able but decidedly second-rate work of Heywood, Massinger, Middleton, Dekker, Marston, and Shirley. Some of these men wrote for the City, some for the Court; but as the City imitated almost entirely the ways and manners of the Court, there is no difference in the spirit of the plays produced for these different audiences, although their subjects were sometimes different. Both the Court and that part of the City which favoured art and followed Court standards, were, very early in the reign of James I., separated by a hard and fast line from the puritanic body of the nation. Although the seeds of the Puritan movement lay deep down in the feeling of the nation, James I., by his theory of divine right, by his proposition of "no bishop, no king," was the first to make the division of the people into two distinct parties, obvious and serious. There might still be some men, artistic in temperament and of deep moral sensibilities, who, like Milton, could unite in their youth the artistic enjoying life of the Cavalier with the thoughtful scholarly life of the Puritan; but sooner or later, so wide was the breach made by James I., every practical man interested in the life of action must make a decided choice, must throw in his lot either with one or the other party. To a wide nature

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the choice would be exceedingly difficult. The King and the Cavalier party, who represented the wider existence of art and thought, lived a private life, which was devoid of all high sentiment and morality; in public life equally devoid of high principles and patriotism. James was ungrateful and insolent; his Court was filled with needy and unattractive Scotch favourites; he was weak and imperious in his behaviour to his Parliament, shamefully unpatriotic in his foreign policy. He had allowed the execution of Raleigh, the hero of England's most glorious period, in order to please Spain; he wished, in defiance of all the instincts of the nation, to cement this friendship by a marriage; he had ruined English dignity on the Continent by the part he took, or rather did not take, in the Thirty Years' War. Unfortunately for the acceptance of his grand theories of the right divine by which he ruled, James was not fitted by personal attractions to inspire an enthusiasm such as that which had glorified Elizabeth and inspired her poets. God's delegate, as he called himself—God's silly vassal, as the Presbyterians called him—"was exhibited to the world stammering, slobbering, shedding unmanly tears, trembling at a drawn sword, and talking in the style alternately of a buffoon and a pedagogue." On the other hand, what could be more repulsive and narrow than the Puritan morality; what could be more intolerant and unreasonable than the view they took of life and art: their morality could make as complete a wreck of life as the Cavalier immorality. The vindictiveness of both sides to each other had been signalised, early in the reign of Elizabeth, by a war of pamphlets—the Puritans indulging in heavy Scriptural curses against their opponents; their opponents displaying to the fullest extent their genius for insults. Only in Sir Philip Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* do we find any attempt at the reconciliation of the truth of both sides. Nash, the dramatist, was especially fertile in the invention of insults; and we find even the courtly Lyly taking leave of an adversary with, "Farewell, and be hanged." The stage was "a beam, an exceeding great beam," in the eyes of the Puritans. They had no desire to reform it: it must be annihilated. Between 1616 and 1625 appeared a mass of Puritan literature directed aginst it. In 1616 was published *The Rich Cabinet, Furnished with Varietie of Descriptions*, undertaking to prove that player is now a name of contempt; and in 1632 appeared a great work, which had taken seven years to write, *The Histrio-Mastix*, by Prynne. This unfortunate man incurred severe punishment, not only because he had written against an institu-

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tion protected by royal authority, but also because he had spoken the utmost evil against women actors.[1] Actresses had come over from France and taken the place of boys in 1629, and the Queen and her ladies had themselves acted in a pastoral. Prynne was thus found to be verging on high treason; his book was condemned to be burnt, he himself was expelled from the Bar and the Inn, and was compelled to pay a fine of £5000 to the King, and exposed to public disgrace in the pillory. Prynne had only seen four several plays, so he tells us, but the contemplation of these four plays had apparently but strengthened his prejudices. "Stage-plays have their origin from the devil: were invented and practised by his instruments (Pagans), and are therefore necessarily sinful and unlawful unto Christians. . . . They are among the pomps and vanities of this wicked world which Christians renounce in baptism; they are often impious, sacrilegious, and blasphemous; if not, are idle, frothy, superfluous, and unprofitable." Ten years after the publication of this work the theatres were closed and Prynne was revenged; for the grave, serious, Puritan spirit, the enemy to all that was unthinking and buoyant and spontaneous in life, spread its tyranny over the nation and crushed out all art. Under the first two Stuarts art did indeed tend to become "frothy and unprofitable," and our serious and more intolerant ancestors showed no more ability in separating the use of a thing from its abuse than we do now. And without doubt these kings, disliked by the nation with whose deepest instincts they were at variance, did much to discredit the theatre by their patronage. They fostered artificially an institution which might have profited by a normal decline, and might have revived again when naturally called for by the needs and circumstances of national life. It is to the Stuarts' dramatic patronage, to the consequent unhealthy life of the drama, that we owe the violence of the great burst of Puritan rage against it, which overwhelmed it entirely for a time, but only served to eventually stimulate it to a still more reactionary and degenerate life after the Restoration. James I. had been a friend to the drama in Scotland, when to favour it was to assert the royal independence. In England he took the actors under special royal protection. The Lord Chamberlain's company, of which Richard Burbadge and Shakspere had been members, became known in 1603 as that of the King's servants. The Earl of

[1] Taswell and Langmead say the Queen and her ladies acted after the book had been published, which makes the royal indignation against Prynne appear still more unjust.

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Worcester's players became the Queen's Players; and the children of the Chapel, in 1603 became known as the children of His Majesty's Revels; but his own example, the example of his Court, his unattractive favourites, had on it an influence the reverse of inspiring; no Court was worse than that of James I., and its influence then was very wide and very powerful. London has never quite been to England what Paris has been to France; but under Elizabeth and James there certainly was a danger of the too great predominance of the capital; the Court, both in religion and politics, influenced the country to a dangerous extent. Its tone in religion was either that of servile faith and unthinking superstition or utter indifference. "To be of no religion," says a character in Fletcher's *The Elder Brother*,

> "Argues a subtle moral understanding,
> And it is often cherished."

James I., although he gratified Puritan feeling by passing a statute against the profane use of sacred names on the stage, made no secret of the fact that the strength of his religious convictions was quite as much due to political reasoning as to the enthusiasm of a spiritual faith. Thus, if we perhaps except Massinger, who gives evidence of a sincere piety, which in its mysticism stamps him as a Roman Catholic, the dramatists who wrote for the fashionable world were careful to exclude a religious element. Political allusions were frequent, though, with the exception of Middleton's *Game of Chess*, which deals in a thoroughly national spirit with the affair of the Spanish match, few of them showed any deep or genuine interest in the national politics of the time. It was indeed natural that this should be the case, for the national instincts were so opposed to the royal policy that the publication of any play reflecting them would have been dangerous to the author. It was probably to please his city patrons, who in a great national question of this kind would be sure to lean to the traditional national policy, that Middleton ventured to treat the subject of the Spanish marriage in a manner so obnoxious to the king. It is an indication of the strength of public opinion on this point that its author had the courage to produce it, and that it was allowed to pass the censorship of the Master of the Revels, before the king, who had ordered that no modern Christian king should be represented on the stage, commanded it to be suppressed. But the playwright for the most part avoided all political allusions, save those which were quite innocent of partisan motive, or those which fell in

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with the king's political theories concerning his divine right. Almost all the dramatists of this age, Chapman excepted, are what Coleridge calls "high-flying passive obedience Tories." The sentiment of Lord Huntly in Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* is no exaggeration of the kind of tone James exacted from his followers—

> "But kings are earthly gods, there is no meddling
> With their anointed bodies: for their actions
> They, only, are accountable to heaven."

Allusions "to the divinity of royal birth" won the favour of a Stuart, who promptly suppressed unfavourable allusion even to one on whom the royal favour had fallen; as in the case of *Eastward Ho*, when Jonson, although not guilty of the offending lines, generously joined Dekker and Marston in prison. But that political interest was merely suppressed, not dead, among the dramatists of the decline, is evidenced by the comparatively good historical plays that we have in this period. *Bussy d'Ambois*, and *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, by Chapman, and *Perkin Warbeck* by Ford. All three rank high in the literature of the historical drama. They belong to a school quite different from that to which the historical plays of Shakspere belong. Shakspere takes us back to the past, but he interests us not in the spirit and movements of that past, but in its characters. The interest in *Julius Cæsar* is not in the party crisis, not in the political importance of the conspiracy against Cæsar—in *Coriolanus* it is not in the importance of the democratic agrarian revolt against the aristocracy of Rome—nor in *Richard II.* is it in the constitutional revolution which placed Henry IV. on the throne—nor in *Henry V.* in the victorious achievements of England over France—but in the inward mental struggles of the heroes of these movements, in the psychological battles of their natures with their will. But the plays of Chapman and of Ford belong to that different school, which excites interest by entering into the spirit of the age. As Mr. Ward says, speaking of Chapman's works, "Their author shows himself fully aware of the true significance of the realities which cast their lurid glare across his mimic scene. A strong historical sense, if I may use the expression, is so rare even in the greatest of our Elizabethan dramatists, that it is all the more noteworthy to find Chapman thoughtfully sounding the depths of the movements, from the consequences of which his age was still trembling. There are passages in these plays which go to the very bottom of the dark waters from which France had

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recently emerged, and which might have taught the age of James I. lessons sorely needed by it." So with Ford in *Perkin Warbeck*. It is strictly true to the facts of history as given in Bacon's *Life of Henry VII.* With the utmost skill he treats the character of Warbeck: no doubt is thrown on the assumption that he was an impostor, yet care is taken that he should never betray himself; the spirit of the episode is preserved, though the personal dignity and attractions of the impostor allow him to be the hero of the play. The dramatists of this period, although they fail in sustained vigour, in artistic self-control, in that deeper insight which alone can give the power of characterisation, yet they are often very successful as poets. Isolated passages of poetic beauty, recalling the manner of the best Elizabethans, occur again and again in their works; but they are the most unequal of artists, incapable for the most part of long sustained poetic effort.

CHAPMAN is specially distinguished by his likeness to Ben Jonson. He had not the great Jonson's gift of humour and satire, but he was as full, as he, of grave morality and dignified sententiousness, of speculation as to the deeper problems of life. Long philosophic speculations interrupt the action of the play. In the tragedy of *Cæsar and Pompey*, Cato discourses on an after-life:—

> "We shall, past death
> Retain those forms of knowledge, learn'd in life:
> Since if what here we learn we there shall lose,
> Our immortality were not life but time:
> And that our souls in reason are immortal
> Their natural and proper objects prove;
> Which immortality and knowledge are:
> For to that object ever is referr'd
> The nature of the soul, on which the acts
> Of her high faculties are still employed:
> And that true object must her powers obtain
> To which they are in nature's aim directed;
> Since 'twere absurd to have her set an object
> Which possibly she never can aspire."

The fact that literature tends to become pedantic and obscure when the creative genius of an age is gone, finds continually abundant proof in Chapman's works. He has a misplaced desire to show his learning, to argue on unprovable subjects; of which this passage, in which he endeavours to show that the soul is immortal because she must be of the same nature as the object she pursues, is only one among many examples. Equally notice-

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able in Chapman's works is another characteristic, which he certainly did not share with his age, and which again connects him with the high-minded Jonson. Chapman has "a courageous, ardent spirit, utterly at odds with life, but still true to its own nobility, still capable in happier moments of divining life's real significance and of asserting lofty truths in pregnant words—

> 'Free suffering for the truth makes sorrow sing
> And mourning far more sweet than banquetting:
> Let all men judge, and who is, can deny
> That the rich crown of old Humanity
> Is still your birthright? and was ne'er let down
> From Heaven for rule of beast's lives: but your own.'"

"He was a person of most reverend aspect, religious and temperate, qualities rarely meeting in a poet," says Wood; and Jonson, whose standard of what men ought to be was so high, is said to have "loved" Chapman. Webster placed Chapman at the head of contemporary dramatists; but although Chapman's principal plays, *Bussy d'Ambois*, *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, and *Biron's Conspiracy*, are worthy of a high place among Elizabethan historical plays, and although some of his comic characters are cleverly drawn, yet he is not by any means deserving of such praise, for his powers of characterisation are of no high order. As Charles Lamb says, "He could not go out of himself to inform and animate other existences." We can see very well what he means a character to be: he had all his great contemporary's purpose, but little of his genius in carrying out that purpose. Indeed, the great popularity of his historical plays was partly due to the recency of the events with which they dealt: spectators would surround Chapman's creations with the interest they naturally felt in the personages who had lived and acted so near their own times. The scene of *Bussy d'Ambois* is laid at the court of Henry III. of France. Henry III. came to the throne in 1574, and led a disgraceful career, entirely under the dictation of his mother and her minions. Chapman dares not to treat him quite with that severity which he deserves; "but the character of Monsieur, his equally contemptible brother, he handles with unsparing fidelity to fact." Bussy d'Ambois is a "robust child of nature," standing out in relief against the background of a corrupt court, to which he has been introduced by Monsieur. He raises himself without help to an independent position, seeking for favour neither with him nor the Duke of Guise, the leader of that Holy League, begun in 1576, to extirpate

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heresy. Both conspire to ruin him, and his death is effected by means of the jealousy of the Count of Montsury, with whose wife Bussy is in love. It is what we are told about d'Ambois, what is said of him, more than the actual handling of his character, which makes us realise what Chapman wished him to be. The scene in which a messenger, in the presence of King Henry III. of France and his court, tells the manner of a combat to which he was witness, of three to three, in which d'Ambois remained sole survivor, is characteristic of the descriptive manner in which Chapman interests one in his characters :—

"I saw fierce d'Ambois and his two brave friends
Enter the field, and at their heels their foes,
Which were the famous soldiers Barrisor,
L'Anou, and Pyrrhot, great in deeds of arms :
All which arriv'd at the even'st piece of earth
The field afforded, the three challengers
Turn'd head, drew all their rapiers and stood rank'd,
When face to face the three defendants met them
Alike prepared and resolute alike.
Like bonfires of contributory wood
Every man's look show'd, fed with other's spirit ;
As one had been a mirror to another,
Like forms of life and death each took from other :
And so were life and death mix'd at their heights
That you could see no fear of death (for life)
Nor love of life (for death) ; but in their brows
Pyrrho's opinion in great letters shone :
'That life and death in all respects are one.'
. . . . . .
So Barrisor (advised),
Advanced his naked rapier 'twixt both sides,
Ripp'd up the quarrel, and compared six lives,
Then laid in balance with six idle words,
Offer'd remission and contrition too :
Or else that he and d'Ambois might conclude
The others' danger. D'Ambois liked the last :
But Barrisor's friends (being equally engaged
In the main quarrel) never would expose
His life alone to that they all deserved ;
And (for the other offer of remission)
D'Ambois (that like a laurel put on fire
Sparkled and spit) did much more than scorn
That his wrong should incense him so like chaff
To go so soon out, and like lighted paper
Approve his spirit at once both fire and ashes."

One can hardly believe, says Charles Lamb, but that some of these lines were written after Milton had described his warring angels ; those, for instance, describing the clash of the combat—

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"And then like flame and powder they commix'd,
So sprightly that I wish they had been spirits,
That the ne'er shutting wounds they needs must open,
Might as they open'd shut, and never kill."

In this scene he gives evidence of that taste and genius for the description of combat which led him to be the translator of Homer's *Iliad;* he shows that delight in the stirring scenes of warfare, which wanted only simplicity and directness of narration to make him an admirable interpreter of the Homeric spirit.

In the preface to the *Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, Chapman, in Jonsonian manner, states his idea of what a tragedy should be. "Material instruction, elegant and sententious excitation to virtue and deflexion from her contrary, are," he says, "the soul, limbs, and limits of an authentical tragedy." The hero of this tragedy is Clermont, not a child of nature like Bussy, but a man given to lengthy moral reflections, for which he always finds abundant opportunity, in spite of the absorbing object of his life, which is the speedy revenge of the death of his brother Bussy.

"No particular torture
Can force me from my glad obedience
To anything the high and general Cause
To match with his whole fabric hath ordained.
And know ye all (though far from all your aims,
Yet worth them all, and all men's endless studies)
That in this one thing all the discipline
Of manners and of manhood is contained:
A man to join himself with the universe
For his main sway, and make, in all things fit,
One with that all, and go on, round as it;
Not plucking from the whole his wretched part
And into straits or into nought revert,
Wishing the complete universe might be
Subject to such a ray of it as he;
But to consider great necessity
All things as well refract as voluntary
Reduceth to the prime celestial cause;
Which he that yields to with a man's applause;
And cheek by cheek goes, crossing it no breath,
But like God's image follows to the death,
That man is truly wise; and everything,
Each cause and every part, distinguishing
In nature, with enough art understands,
And that full glory merits at all hands,
That doth the whole world at all parts adorn
And appertains to one celestial born."

The stage direction immediately following—*exeunt omnes*—seems to convey the effect which a speech so truly weighty

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in moral purposes, yet so long, so ponderous, so disconnected with all the action of the play, must produce on spectator and reader. Chapman is not happier in the characterisation of *Biron's Conspiracy*, and in the intimately connected sequel, the tragedy of the *Marshal of France*. These plays, dealing with events so recent, were prohibited by the desire of the French ambassador, —Henry IV. reigning when it was produced,—as well as by the statute of James I., forbidding the dramatic representation of modern kings. But in spite of the opportunities he had for the study and knowledge of the character of Biron, Chapman cannot make the figure of his hero interesting. "The note of Biron's character," says Mr. Ward, "is that of overbearing arrogance." We have evidence in this play of Chapman's freedom from the slavish loyalty of his day,—his contempt for those kings "who strained past right for their right;" his conception of their great duties. He puts the following lines into the mouth of Henry IV., deliberating on the death of a traitor—

> "For in one subject, death's unjust affrights,
> Passions and pains, though he be ne'er so poor,
> Ask more remorse than the voluptuous spleens
> Of all kings in the world deserve respect:
> He should be born gray headed, that will bear
> The weight of empire."

But in this, as in all of Chapman's plays, the chief merit lies in individual passages, in specimens of that "full and heightened style," which attracted so the admiration of Webster. Some of the best lines of Chapman are in the passages in which he indulges his love for simile: sometimes, indeed, we find his great taste for metaphor degenerating into a love of conceits: he is frequently on that dangerous borderland when overwrought thoughts tend to become merely obscure: we see in him the spirit of that age which produced the fantastic and metaphysical school: his wit is at times too much

> "Of the true Pierian spring
> That can make anything of anything;"

and his similes are sometimes so obscure and sometimes so strained that they fatigue the attention and injure the quality of his verse. In a passage in *Biron's Conspiracy*, he compares the eclipse of men's glories when they turn traitors to the stormy eclipse of the moon by a cloud—

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"As when the moon hath comforted the night,
And set the whole world in silver of her light,
The planets, asterisms, and whole state of heaven
In beams of gold descending: all the winds
Bound up in caves, charged not to drive abroad
Their cloudy heads; a universal peace
(Proclaim'd in silence) of the quiet earth:
Soon as her hot and dry fumes are let loose,
Storms and clouds mixing suddenly put out
The eyes of all those glories: the creation
Turn'd into chaos: and we then desire
For all our joy of life the death of sleep,
So when the glories of our lives (men's loves,
Clear consciences, our fames and loyalties),
That did us worthy comfort, are eclipsed,
Grief and disgrace invade us: and for all
Our night of life besides, our misery craves,
Dark earth would ope and hide us in our graves."

A passage in *Bussy d'Ambois*, less perfect, perhaps, if the analogy be examined closely, is poetic, with a touch of feeling which Chapman, grave and self-controlled and studied as he is in style, did not often allow himself—

"The errant wilderness of a woman's face;
Where men cannot get out, for all the comets
That have been lighted at it: though they know
That adders lie a-sunning in their smiles."

Characteristic of his best style, and of that style peculiar to himself, are his lines on the master-spirit in *Biron's Tragedy*:—

"Give me the spirit that on life's rough sea
Loves to have his sails filled with a lusty wind,
Even till his sailyards tremble, his mast cracks,
And his rapt ship runs on her side so low
That she drinks water, and her keel ploughs air:
There is no danger to a man that knows
What life and death is; there's not any law
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful
That he should stoop to any other law:
He goes before them and commands them all
That to himself is a law rational."

Next to Chapman must be noticed THOMAS HEYWOOD, for Charles Lamb has given great prominence to Heywood by calling him "a prose Shakspere." But to compare him in any way with his great fellow dramatist is to excite expectations which must be doomed to disappointment. Heywood writes exceedingly able verse, at times picturesque and striking: he constructs

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plots which are interesting and well carried out; he sustains well a simple uncomplex character, and, above all, he is innocent of that moral coarseness which disfigured so many of the works of his contemporaries. He is a finished playwright: his work contains no hints of great and undeveloped powers, no flashes of a great, feeling, and thinking genius, which one would naturally expect in one who possessed the faintest claim to compare with Shakspere, and which we see far more in the works of his wild and erring contemporaries Webster and Ford. In two hundred and twenty plays had Heywood "an entire or at least a main figure." Only twenty-five have come down to us—"The rest have perished, exposed to the casualties of a theatre;" but the plays that we have of his do not bear any marks of haste or careless workmanship. Heywood was distinctly a finished artist of the second-rate order, exceedingly fertile and exceedingly versatile. In *The Brazen Age*, *The Golden Age*, and *The Silver Age*, he successfully and pleasantly dramatises classical tales. Ceres, seeking her daughter, questions Triton—

"Thou that on thy shelly trumpet
Summons the sea-god, answer from the depth.
Triton. On Neptune's sea-horse with my concave trump
Through all the abyss I have shrill'd thy daughter's loss.
The channels clothed in waters, the low cities
In which the water-gods and sea-gods dwell,
I have perused; sought through whole woods and forests
Of leafless coral planted in the deeps;
Toss'd up beds of pearl; roused up huge waves
And stern sea monsters from their rocky dens;
Those bottoms, bottomless; shallows and shelves,
And all those currents where the earth's springs break in,
Those plains where Neptune feeds his porpoises,
Sea-morses, seals, and all his cattle else:
Through all our ebbs and tides my trump hath blazed her,
Yet can no cavern show me Proserpine."

Then Ceres questions the Earth—

"Fair sister Earth, for all these beauteous fields
Spread o'er thy breast; for all these fertile crops
With which my plenty hath enrich'd thy bosom;
For all those rich and pleasant wreaths of grain
With which so oft thy temples I have crown'd;
For all the yearly liveries and fresh robes
Upon thy summer's beauty I bestow:
Show me my child.
Earth. Not in revenge, fair Ceres,
That your remorseless plough have raked my breast,
Nor that your iron-tooth'd harrows print my face

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So full of wrinkles; that you dig my sides
For marl and soil, or make me bleed my springs
Through all my open'd veins to weaken me—
Do I conceal your daughter? I have spread
My arms from sea to sea, look'd o'er my mountains,
Examined all my pastures, groves, and plains,
Marshes and wolds, my woods and champain fields,
My dens and caves,—and yet, from foot to head
I have no place on which the moon doth tread."

He can tell a highly-wrought picturesque story in appropriate verse—

"I remember
There lived a Spanish princess of our name,
An Isabella too, and not long since,
Who from her palace window steadfastly
Gazing upon the sun, her hair took fire.
Some augurs held it as a prodigy:
I rather think she was Latona's brood,
And that Apollo courted her bright hair;
Else envying that her tresses put down his,
He scorch'd them off in envy."

The standard of Heywood's morality is undoubtedly higher than that of his generation, but at times it is excessively strained, as in the overdrawn scene in *The Challenge for Beauty*, between Petrocella, the fair Spanish lady, and Montferrers. Montferrers, an English captain, who himself is in love with Petrocella, and beloved by her, though this is unknown to him, is the messenger to her of another's love—of Valladaura's, of whom he is the captive by war. In this scene Montferrers, encouraged by Petrocella, declares unwillingly his love for her, and, pretending that he wishes to test the strength of her affection for him, makes her swear to an unknown condition—

"Love noble Valladaura,
And at his soonest appointment, marry him.
Pet. Then I am lost."

In spite of what Charles Lamb says concerning the simplicity and nature of Heywood's drama, it cannot be denied that some of his scenes and episodes are full of that forced and exaggerated feeling which is best described as sentimentality. In *The Woman killed with Kindness*, which has the credit of being one of the first artistic rendering of the incidents of domestic life, pathos of a rather weakly moral and sentimental kind is accumulated, till the reader almost longs for the wild and fiercely unconventional outbursts of a Webster or a Ford.

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Mr. Frankford, in order to punish his faithless wife, determines to kill her with kindness.

> "I'll not martyr thee,
> . . . but with usage
> Of more humility torment thy soul,
> And kill thee even with kindness."

This questionable forbearance, which was regarded by the conventions of the day as the highest magnanimity, has the desired effect, and Mrs. Frankford dies penitent, amid the mingled tears and blessings and pardons of her husband and friends, admiring the "grace and humanity" of her husband.

The dramatist MIDDLETON has had great prominence given to him, first in his lifetime, by his courage in dealing in the *Game of Chess* with such a forbidden political subject as the Spanish marriage; and secondly, posterity has given him undue importance by a long and rather unnecessary controversy concerning the priority of his or Shakspere's witches. Certainly it is by his *Witch* that Middleton deserves to be remembered. His witches are not the half-real, half-subjective creations of Shakspere, in which he seems to have mingled the popular conceptions of witches with his own idea of the soul's inward drama—of its spiritual promptings, which sometimes are so vivid that they appear to the mind as forms of the external world; they are simply the very vigorous and picturesque renderings of that class of malign creatures who were a definite part of the popular creed. Any eccentricity in those times branded a person as a witch: and it needed only a little imagination to picture them, in virtue of the evil power which made them different to other men, defying the laws of gravitation, and riding on broomsticks on midnight journeys through the air. Middleton's *Hecate* says—

> "O what a dainty pleasure 'tis
> To ride in the air
> When the morn shines fair,
> And sing and dance and toy and kiss,
> Over woods, high rocks and mountains,
> Over seas (our mistress' fountains),
> Over steep towers and turrets,
> We fly by night 'mongst troops of spirits.
> No ring of bells to our ears sounds,
> No howl of wolves, no yelps of hounds;
> No, not the noise of water's breach,
> Or cannon's throat, our height can reach."

They are the bad powers to which wicked people resort when

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they wish to commit crimes: they do not, like Shakspere's witches, *originate* bad impulses. They are distinctly different in conception from Shakspere's witches; thus the controversy concerning the priority of *The Witch* or *Macbeth* can do very little damage to the originality of either dramatist. But Middleton, if we except his work in this play, may be classed among the second-rate dramatists of the decline, who, although they were superior in morality, and had conceptions of higher and purer feeling, yet were inferior in power and vigour. The great inequality of some of the later Elizabethans was doubtless due to their uncontrolled self-abandonment to their feelings; their grotesqueness and absurdity, and the coarseness which frequently disfigures their works, were due to their want of self-control, both moral and artistic; but at the same time they gave what little genius they had full play, and in their works we find passages of true poetic beauty,—passages which recall the great Elizabethan nature at its best, in all its force: we have gleams of genius which light up the scene with the glow of passion and despair, or with the pale intense light of pathos. Morality and enjoyment of life were so separated in the national creed that the dramatist could look nowhere for a standard of morality. There were two sides to the artist's life: one was Pleasure, the other Despair—

> "Sweet Pleasure,
> Delicious Pleasure! earth's supremest good,
> The spring of blood, though it dry up our blood;
> Rob me of that (though to be drunk with pleasure,
> As rank excess even in best things, is bad,
> Turns man into a beast); yet, that being gone,
> A horse, and this (the goodliest shape) all one,
> We feed, wear rich attires; and strive to cleave
> The stars with marble towers; fight battles; spend
> Our blood, to buy us names: and in iron hold
> Will we eat our roots to imprison fugitive gold:
> But to do thus, what spell can us excite?
> This, the strong magic of our appetite:
> The feast which richly, life itself undoes.
> Who'd not die thus?
> Why, even those that starve in voluntary wants,
> And, to advance the mind, keep the flesh poor,
> The world enjoying them; them, not the world:
> Would they do this, but that they are proud to suck
> A sweetness from such sourness."[1]

A certain John Jones, living in 1635, expresses in a dirge the darker side of this life, whose only motive power is Pleasure—

[1] Dekker.

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"Die, die, ah die,
We all must die,
'Tis fate's decree;
Then ask not why.
When we were framed, the Fates consultedly
Did make this law, that all things born should die.
Yet Nature strove,
And did deny
We should be slaves
To Destiny.
At which, they heap'd
Such misery
That Nature's self
Did wish to die:
And thank their goodness, that they would foresee,
To end our cares with such a mild decree."

Life, being but the eager pursuit after pleasure, welcomes sometimes a death, which, because it gives rest, is "a mild decree." Life is purposeless: those who seek to leave a living name behind are but vain in their ambition,

"And weave but nets to catch the wind."

If this school had produced philosophers instead of artists they would have been pessimists of the deepest dye. DEKKER, who in common with Webster wrote *Westward Ho*, from which the address to Pleasure is taken, had none of the brilliant flashes of genius which Webster displays; but his conceptions of life were the same. His mind is of a lower order, of a coarser kind, but superior in that it is capable of more sustained effort. Dekker is well known as having, in conjunction with Marston, written the *Satiro-mastix*, a play exceedingly feeble in itself, but interesting as marking an epoch in Ben Jonson's literary quarrels. In theory Dekker had apparently a high idea of the dramatic art—

"That man give me, whose breast filled by the muses
With rapture, into a second them infuses:
Can give an actor sorrow, rage, joy, passion,
Whilst he again (by self-same agitation)
Commands the hearers, sometimes drawing out tears,
Then smiles, and fills them both with hopes and fears."

But in his practical dramatic work he appears to forget his standard. He sought for popularity by inventing startling plots, which transcend all bounds of probability; he introduces "ghosts, coal black"—wondrous hats, which in a moment will transport the wearer whithersoever he wishes. The verse of the play of

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Fortunatus, in which this supernatural hat plays a large part, does credit to Dekker: it is straightforward, simple, and powerful, weighed down by no thought that could tend to make it obscure. The goddess Fortune appears to Fortunatus and offers him the choice of six things—Wisdom, Strength, Health, Beauty, Long Life, and Riches.

"*Fortunatus.* O, whither am I rapt beyond myself,
More violent conflicts fight in every thought
Than his, whose fatal choice Troy's downfall wrought.
Shall I contract myself to Wisdom's lore?
Then I lose Riches: and a wise man poor
Is like a sacred book that's never read;
To himself he lives and to all else seems dead.
This age thinks better of a gilded fool
Than of a threadbare saint in wisdom's school.
I will be strong: then I refuse long life,
And though mine arm should conquer twenty worlds,
There's a lean fellow beats all conquerors:
The greatest strength expires with loss of breath,
The mightiest in one minute stoop to death.
Then take long life or Health? should I do so,
I might grow ugly, and that tedious scroll
Of months and years much misery may enroll;
Therefore I'll beg for beauty; yet I will not,
The fairest cheek hath oftentimes a soul
Leprous as sin itself and far more foul.
The wisdom of this world is idiotism;
Strength a weak reed; Health, sickness' enemy;
And it at length will have the victory.
Beauty is but a painting; and Long Life
Is a long journey in December gone,
Tedious, and full of tribulation;
Therefore, dread sacred empress, make me rich.
My choice is store of gold; the rich are wise;
He that upon his back rich garments wears
Is wise, though on his head grow Midas' ears.
Gold is the strength, the sinews of the world,
The health, the soul, the beauty most divine;
A mask of gold hides all deformities;
Gold is heaven's physic, life's restorative;
O therefore make me rich."

MARSTON, like Dekker, sought for popular favour by dealing with the horrible and the supernatural. This degenerate age required extraordinary stimulus for its emotions, and Marston strove to gratify it. For strange and unnatural incident, *Antonio and Mellida* has few rivals; for general horror and bloodiness, its sequel, *Antonio's Revenge*, has certainly no equal. Antonio, son of the Duke of Genoa, loves Mellida daughter of

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the Duke of Venice. These dukes are enemies: ultimately the Duke of Genoa is routed by the Duke of Venice. Antonio, to gain his love in spite of family feuds, comes to the court of Venice disguised as an Amazon. Mellida, in the disguise of a page, elopes with him. Pursuit is made after the Amazon and the page; they are caught; but the play ends happily with the apparent forgiveness of the lovers by Piero. The sequel proves that this is a temporary illusion. *Antonio's Revenge* is full of "sullen tragic scenes." The prologue hints at the awful nature of the coming play—

> "If any spirit breathes within this bound
> Uncapable of weighty passion,
> . . . . . .
> Who would not know what men must be: let such
> Hurry amain from our black visaged shows:
> We shall affright their eyes. But if a breast
> Nail'd to the earth with grief; if any heart
> Pierced through with anguish, pant within this ring;
> If there be any blood whose heat is choked
> And stifled with true sense of misery;
> If aught of these strains fill this consort up
> They arrive most welcome."

The Duke of Venice then enters "unbraced, his arms bare, smeared in blood, a poniard in one hand, bloody, and a torch in the other." He is resolved on further bloodshed: wishing to sow dissension between Mellida and Antonio, he causes a former lover of hers to be slain, the corpse placed by her, so that her astonishment and fright being put down to love for this former suitor, convict her in Antonio's eyes of fickleness. Then having said "that he sees no reason to be reasonable," he murders what friends he still possesses, reduces Mellida to a despair, in which she dies. "O world," she says,

> "Thou art too subtle
> For honest natures to converse withal,
> Therefore I'll leave thee."

Then Antonio begins his revenge, stimulated by his father's ghost. He is quite successful, and clears the stage of the remaining characters, some of whom, however, only disappear temporarily, to reappear as ghosts before the curtain falls. Thus the poor orphan, as he is called, has his revenge. Occasionally Marston's verse corresponds to the crudeness and grotesqueness of his plot: the duke says—

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"I'll conquer Rome,
Pop out the light of bright religion,
Then helter, skelter, all cocksure."

But very often we meet with passages which recall the best manner of Beaumont and Fletcher:—

"As having clasped a rose
Within my palm, the rose being taken away,
My hand retains a little breath of sweet:
So may man's trunk, his spirit slipped away,
Hold still a faint perfume of his sweet guest."

The answer of Isabella, the wicked countess of another play, condemned to death for numberless crimes, to the executioner who bids her bind her eyes, is striking and effective:—

"I have lived too long in darkness, my friend:
And yet mine eyes with their majestic light
Have got new muses in a poet's sprite,
They've been more gazed at than the god of day,
Their brightness never could be flattered:
Yet thou command'st a fixed cloud of lawn
To eclipse eternally these minutes of light.
I am prepared."

And Marston is happy in the choice of those similes, without which an Elizabethan could never speak of nature's changes—

"Night, like a mask, is entering Heaven's great hall,
With thousand torches ushering in the way."

Marston considered that the essence of the drama, what he calls the "life of these things," was in action. Therefore we cannot expect from him any of that higher dramatic art which consists in giving interest in character.

Undoubtedly the greatest dramatist of this declining school was WEBSTER. He does give us interest in character, though the character he deals with is abnormal character in abnormal circumstances. He, too, can tell a story, and so arrange its episodes that incident and character act and react on one another; but his conception of the drama is essentially degenerate and unhealthy; he is always appealing to the most extreme emotions of his audience. He appeals, indeed, successfully; the horrible with him never borders on the grotesque. "To move a horror skilfully, to touch a soul to the quick, to lay upon fear as much as it can bear, to wean and weary a life till it is ready to drop and

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then step in with mortal instruments to take its last forfeit,—this only a Webster can do. Writers of an inferior genius may 'upon horror's head horrors accumulate,' but they cannot do this. They mistake quantity for quality, they 'terrify babes with painted devils,' but they know not how a soul is capable of being moved; their terrors want dignity, their affrightments are without decorum." Webster's characters and their lives are best described by two lines at the beginning of the Duchess of Malfy's dirge—

> "Their life, a general mist of error,
> Their death, a hideous storm of terror."

Very striking and yet intensely horrible is the character of Vittoria Corombona, or the White Devil. She is indeed an abnormal being: in spite of the skill with which Webster treats her character, she is an artistic and moral blot, as horrible as Marston's Isabella. It is as inartistic, as Mr. Ward says, to represent human nature so abnormally horrible and degraded as it would be were sculpture to deal with physical deformity. Vittoria has a passionate impulsive nature, leading her into the most awful crimes, but hidden under a cold and unabashed demeanour. At last she is brought to trial on the charge of having murdered her husband with the aid of her lover the Duke of Brachiano. She is tried in the presence of the Cardinal Monticelso, cousin to her deceased husband, the ambassadors of France, England, and Spain—

> "Humbly thus,—
> Thus low, to the most worthy and respected
> Leiger ambassadors, my modesty
> And womanhood I tender; but withal
> So entangled in a cursed accusation
> That my defence, of force, like Perseus,
> Must personate masculine virtue. To the point,
> Find me but guilty, sever head from body,
> We'll part good friends. I scorn to hold my life
> At yours or any man's entreaty, sir.
> *Eng. Amb.* She hath a brave spirit.
> *Mon.* Well, well, such counterfeit jewels
> Make true ones oft suspected.
> *Vit.* You are deceived;
> For know that all your strict combined heads
> Which strike against this mine of diamonds,
> Shall prove but glassen hammers, they shall break;
> These are but feigned shadows of my evils;
> Terrify babes, my lord, with painted devils,
> I am past such needless palsy."

"This White Devil of Italy," says Charles Lamb, "sets

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off a bad cause so speciously, and pleads with such an innocence resembling boldness, that we seem to see that matchless beauty of her face which inspires such confidence into her."

"Condemn you me, for that the Duke did love me?" she says—

> "So may you blame some fair and crystal river,
> For that some melancholic distracted man
> Hath drown'd himself in it."

Throughout the whole trial, even when sentence is passed on her, she is careless and bold—

> "O woman's poor revenge
> Which dwells but in the tongue! I will not weep,
> No. I do scorn to call up one poor tear
> To fawn on your injustice."

Only when she stands face to face with Death does her confidence leave her for one moment—

> "My soul, like to some ship in a black storm,
> Is driven I know not whither."

Webster, Charles Lamb tells us, was parish clerk at St. Andrew's, Holborn; he thus accounts for his "anxious recurrence to church matters—sacrilege, tombstones, with the frequent introduction of dirges." He thus gives expression to his professional sympathies. No better illustration of his delight in dwelling on the details and horrors of death can be found than in *The Duchess of Malfy*. The Duchess's crime, an inexpiable crime in the eyes of her brothers, is, that she has married her steward. They prepare for her the most ghastly of tortures to precede death. She is shown the bodies of her husband and children counterfeited in wax, as dead. She is kept waking with noises of madmen till she is nearly mad herself. "I'll tell thee a miracle," she says to her maid Cariola—

> "I am not mad yet, to my cause of sorrow,
> The heaven o'er my head seems made of molten brass,
> The earth of flaming sulphur: yet I am not mad,
> I am acquainted with sad misery
> As the tann'd galley slave is with the oar:
> Necessity makes me suffer constantly,
> And custom makes it easy."

After a dance of sundry sorts of madmen, a coffin, cords, and a bell are produced.

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"Farewell, Cariola!
I pray thee look thou giv'st my little boy
Some syrup for his cold; and let the girl
Say her prayers ere she sleep.—Now what you please,
What death?
. . . . Tell my brothers
That I perceive death (now I'm well awake)
Best gift is they can give or I can take.
I would fain put off my last woman's fault;
I'd not be tedious to you.
Pull and pull strongly, for your able strength
Must pull down heaven upon me.
Yet stay; heaven's gates are not so highly arch'd
As prince's palaces; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees."

She is strangled kneeling. One pang of remorse comes to her murderer. "Cover her face," says her brother Ferdinand, as he stands before her corpse; "mine eyes dazzle . . . she died young." "I think not so," answers Bosola—

"Her infelicity
Seem'd to have years too many."

Webster, at his best, says Mr. Ward, appeals effectively to something besides the emotion of terror. "He has a true insight into human nature. . . . He knows that men and women will lay open the inmost recesses of their souls in moments of deep and sudden agitation. . . . He knows that it is on such occasions that unexpected contrasts, a movement of genuine compassion in an assassin, a movement of the dignity in the most abandoned, will offer themselves to the surprised spectator: he knows the fury and the bitterness, the goad and the after-sting of passion, and the broken vocabulary of grief. All these he knows and is able to reproduce, not continually or wearisomely, but with that perception of supremely fitting occasions which is one of the highest, as it is beyond all doubt one of the rarest, powers of the dramatic genius."

When we read M. Taine on the later Elizabethan dramatists we are oppressed with the sound, the fury, the horror of the atmosphere into which he introduces us. According to him the dramatists were little better than madmen themselves. Inspired with "diabolical energy," their plays are as "tales told by idiots, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The Elizabethan, according to M. Taine, is a savage—an interesting savage certainly; but he is representative of nature when it runs wild in this "violent and over-fed race." But that self-control, heroism,

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and spiritual enthusiasm were not unknown even to those Elizabethans is proved by some of the plays of Ford and Massinger. *The Virgin Martyr*, written by MASSINGER in conjunction with Dekker, shows an attempt to get above the ordinary plot. Massinger was a man of unusually steady piety for those times —he had a certain sort of exalted mysticism. Dorothea, who is exalted with a passionate religious enthusiasm, attracts the love of the son of her pagan persecutor. She is condemned to death as a heretic. "Then with her," cries Antonio, "dies

> "The abstract of all sweetness that's in woman.
> Get me down, friend, that ere the iron hand
> Of Death close up mine eyes, they may at once
> Take my last leave both of this light and her.
> For she, being gone, the glorious sun himself
> To me's Cimmerian darkness."

Through him Dorothea's pardon is obtained.

> "Since I find such grace,
> Grant that the love of this young man for me,
> In which he languisheth to death, may be
> Changed to the love of heaven."

Without doubt Dorothea was a beautiful fanatic, a mystic after the type of the Middle Ages, but none the less does the conception of her character as the motive of the play, show that the later Elizabethan did aspire to emotions other than those of a boisterous animal life. *The Broken Heart* too, by FORD, is an instance of a conception of heroism, which, although perhaps exaggerated and overdrawn, is none the less to be ranked among their ideals. Calantha, princess of Sparta, is beloved by Ithocles, who begs his sister Penthea to intercede for him and further his suit: they are betrothed. While Calantha is celebrating the wedding of two of her courtiers the news comes, first that her father is dead; soon after a messenger arrives with the news that Penthea is dead; and last comes the news that Ithocles is dead,—cruelly murdered. Calantha makes no outward show of grief; the festival is continued. She orders her coronation to take place. Entering the temple dressed in white, a crown on her head, she kneels at the altar: the dead body of Ithocles is borne on a hearse in rich robes, having a crown on its head; is placed by the side of the altar, where she kneels with unbroken calm; rising, she gives directions as to the management of the kingdom. She turns at last to the dead body of Ithocles—

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"Now I turn to thee, thou shadow
Of my contracted lord; bear witness all
I put my mother's wedding ring upon
His finger; 'twas my father's last bequest:
Thus I new marry him, whose wife I am.
Death shall not separate us. O my lords,
I but deceived your eyes with antic gestures
When one news straight came huddling on another,
Of death and death and death; still I danced forward;
But it struck home; and here, and in an instant,
Be such mere women, who with shrieks and outcries
Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,
Yet live to vow new pleasures, and outlive them.
They are the silent griefs which cut the heartstrings:
Let me die smiling.
. . . . . .
One kiss on these cold lips: my last . . .
Argos now's Sparta's king.
Dies.

Charles Lamb says "Ford was of the first order of poets. He sought for sublimity, not by parcels, in metaphors or visible images, but directly, where she has her full residence in the heart of man; in the actions and sufferings of the greatest minds." The ingenuity of his characterisation in *Perkin Warbeck* has given him a high place among historical dramatists. "Out of the darkness of a former age I have endeavoured to personate a great attempt," he says in the dedicatory letter to the Hon. William Cavendish. The character of Warbeck is admirably drawn, attracting the sympathy of the audience. He is inspired with the sense of the greatness of his cause, and Ford, though he makes his audience admire him, is careful that they should regard his enthusiasm as the "frenzy of aspiring youth." "Thy feet of pride have slipt," says King Henry, "to break thy neck." "But not my heart," cries Warbeck—

" . . . my heart
Will mount till every drop of blood be frozen
Till death's perpetual winter. If the sun
Of majesty be darkened, let the sun
Of life be hid from me, in an eclipse
Lasting and universal."

The prospect of death does not shake his confidence—

"Death! pish! 'tis but a sound: a name of air;
A minute's storm: or not so much: to tumble
From bed to bed, be massacred alive
By some physician for a month or two

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In hope of freedom from a fever's torments
Might stagger manhood; here the pain is past
Ere sensibly 'tis felt. Be men of spirit;
Spurn coward passion; so illustrious mention
Shall blaze our names, and style us kings o'er death."

Kathleen, daughter of the Earl of Huntly, whom he had married in his triumphant days, believes in him, and consoles him to the end. Dying, he turns to the king—

"Harry Richmond,
A woman's faith hath robb'd thy fame of triumph."

The Elizabethan drama in its decline must have been a very remunerative profession, if we are to judge by the number of those who devoted themselves to it, many of them certainly having no high calling in that direction. Henry Porter, Thomas Glapthorn, John Cook, Richard Hathwaye, Wentworth Smith, George Wilkins, William Alexander (Earl of Stirling), Samuel Rowley, William Rowley, Daniel, Cyril Tourneur, and James Shirley, are among the best known. They wrote both alone and in partnership with one another. Their dramas, on the whole, conform to that sensational standard to which CYRIL TOURNEUR among the lesser dramatists most nearly attained; the titles of two of the plays are enough to show their nature, the *Atheist's Tragedy*, and the *Revenger's Tragedy*. He was feeble in the construction of his plots, which were full of horror, wickedness, and bloodshed, writing with the utmost facility and smoothness of style. Occasionally there occur passages which show a certain amount of poetic talent. In the *Atheist's Tragedy* are the lines describing the creeping up of the tide round the body of the dead soldier—

"He lay in his armour, as if that had been
His coffin; and the creeping sea (like one
Whose milder temper doth lament the death
Of him whom in his rage he slew) runs up
The shore, embraces him, kisses his cheek;
Goes back again and forces up the sands
To bury him: and every time it parts
Sheds tears upon him; till at last (as if
It could no longer endure to see the man
Whom it had slain, yet loath to leave him) with
A kind of unresolved unwilling pace
Winding her waves one in another (like
A man that folds his arms, or wrings his hands
For grief), ebb'd from the body, and descends;
As if it would sink down into the earth
And hide itself for shame of such a deed."

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JAMES SHIRLEY has been discredited in the eyes of posterity by the criticism of Dryden, who denied him originality. He can, however, lay claim to an extraordinary fertility and facility in the writing of plays; but, as Charles Lamb says, he "claims a place among the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendent genius in himself as that he was the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language, and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common. A new language and quite a new turn of tragic and comic interest came in with the Restoration."

When the drama revived again after the Restoration, it was in the department of comedy that it particularly excelled. Humour played round everything, and found nothing sacred. Life was no longer the serious and exciting thing it had been to the Elizabethan. The great division between the thinking and the practical, and the enjoying and playing parts of the nation still continued; the drama had an unhealthy artificial life, controlled with reference to no living standards of art or morality; the Puritan rule of Cromwell had interrupted the traditions of art; the dramatists of the Restoration had the carelessness, the shallowness, and the immorality of artists who live a life devoid of deep or healthy interests, and in addition they were made reactionary and aggressive in their carelessness of morals, by remembrance of the moral and political tyranny of the Puritans, so suddenly and completely overthrown in 1660. Later the greater spirits of the age felt that although they could not be moral, they might be proper. With Dryden began that reign of propriety in art which insisted so much on the necessity of self-control and self-criticism, on the absence of all that might disturb the smoothness and harmony of the outward form. Art was to have the perfect calm and repose of a Greek statue. But the dignity which comes only from truth to nature could never be theirs, for they had crushed all nature in cultivating this doubtful virtue of propriety; the luxuriant and vigorous national nature was pruned away and suppressed; the natural self was subjected to so much control that, eventually, there came to be no self to control. The Elizabethan was looked upon as a savage, Shakspere as one of the most gifted among barbarians. Then Addison and others worked for dramatic reform; they endeavoured to make tragedy live again on the stage, to make its passions pleasing and elegant, to "refine its rage." But materials for a healthy and effective drama, either comic or tragic, even had genius been allowed free rein, were wanting. The incidents of national life

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did not readily lend themselves to dramatic treatment. What national changes there had been, had been quietly political, without the accompaniment of stirring circumstance. As yet the details of domestic life were not considered important enough to be a sphere for art. Heywood, the first to treat dramatically the incidents of domestic life, had been followed by no other dramatist. Instead, the novelists stepped in; Richardson was the first to inaugurate this form of art by his *Pamela*.

The novel is to us what the stage was to the Elizabethan. Modern life finds in it its truest and most artistic rendering. The circumstances and conditions of present social life, its diffusion of interests and feelings, its complexity, necessitate an outward reserve; the most exciting and dramatic part of modern life goes on below the surface. We have still the same nature that the English people possessed in the days of Elizabeth: we are as eager for life and for joy, our loves and our hatreds are as keen, our disappointments as bitter, our sorrows and our joys are as intense, but many causes have concurred to change our manner of expression. The stage still clings to its old ideals, it clings to the play of action and neglects the subtler play of motive and character, whose deepest life and struggles sometimes make only a faint ripple on the surface of things,—whose vibrations are often but "mere whispers in the rush of hurrying existence." It is this comparatively hidden and inward life which makes the drama of our greatest novel-artists, and till dramatists and actors come to recognise that their ideals are those of a society which has passed away, and that they have little connection with the highest aspects of modern life, the novel will remain as the most complete form of English art, and will find no rival in the stage.

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CHAPTER XIII.

ELIZABETHAN THOUGHT IN RELIGION.

HOOKER, Richard, born 1553; went to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, about 1567; obtained a Fellowship there in 1577; entered the Church in 1581? accepted the living of Drayton Beauchamp in Buckinghamshire, 1584; made Master of the Temple, 1585; controversy with Travers, 1585-6; begins *Ecclesiastical Polity*, 1585-6; retires to living of Boscombe, Wiltshire, 1591; goes to Bishopsbourne, near Canterbury, 1595; died 1600.

Ecclesiastical Polity entered at Stationers' Hall, March 1592-3. Books I.-IV. published 1594? Book V. published 1597.

HOOKER'S work is not only important in the history of the English Church and as marking an epoch in the Puritan controversy; it is important in the highest degree in the history of English thought. Hooker did in the sphere of moral and social knowledge what Bacon did in the sphere of natural science. Bacon gave to the students and observers of nature the idea of law,—of law which was not the creation of the intellectual imagination, but whose actual existence was to be discovered by the careful and patient examination of phenomena.

Bacon was the first in the modern world to establish scientifically the idea that there was an invariable sequence in the phenomena of nature; that there was order in the world of nature. Hooker's work first suggested that there was order in the moral world; that man has neither absolute power over his life nor is the servant of an omnipotent and capricious will; but is always unconsciously governed by law. "He laid down," says Mr. Church, "the theory of a rule derived not from one alone, but from all sources of light and truth with which man finds himself encompassed." In his work lay the germs of what has since developed into moral and political science. He was the first to suggest the idea that law was powerful in the moral world, an idea which, as Mr. Church says, has become the inheritance of the English

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race. The religious controversy of the time gave to Hooker the occasion of his work. He wished to defend the Church of England against the attacks of the Puritans; and by the broad basis he took for his arguments, he made an epoch in the history of the Church of England as great as that which, by the earnestness, simplicity, and enthusiasm of his style, he made in the history of English prose. But Hooker was no conscious innovator either in matter or style. His purpose, he imagined, was purely conservative; he wished to clear the Church of England from the aspersions which had been cast on it by the Puritans; he wished to show that its first principles were grounded not on convention, not on unmeaning compromise, "but on a conscious intelligent adaptation to the needs of human beings," who, in their nature complex, must necessarily be obedient to many kinds of different laws. In the course of his work he endeavoured to show that law was powerful, not only in God's dealings with nature—with unconscious agents, but as active also in his dealings with men in the moral sphere. And in the thought which he brought to establish his reasons, in his eagerness to prove his point, in his enthusiasm for his subject, he gave an intellectuality, an earnestness, and a fervent eloquence to his writing, which first revealed what English prose might be.

"This age," says Hooker, speaking of his own, "is full of tongue and weak of brain." Full of tongue it indeed was, but the controversies to which the settlement of the Reformation gave rise were by no means always conducted with intellectual feebleness. As Hallam says, after the first heat of the Reformation was over, there was a retrocession on the reformed side. The controversy between Catholics and Protestants, instead of being an appeal to authority on one side and an appeal to reason on the other, was conducted with reference to authority on both sides; and as the strength of the Protestant side rests on reason, and receives inadequate support from the "Fathers," Roman Catholicism had frequently the advantage, and many went over to Rome. Andrewes, a bishop of Elizabeth's time, learned in patristic philosophy, carried on the struggle in England, and it was later taken up on the same lines by Archbishop Laud. The Protestant Church in England had also not only to contend with the Catholic, but to defend itself also against equally formidable opponents, viz. the Calvinists, who, holding that all points of Church doctrine as well as of belief are to be found settled for us in the Bible, seemed to be aiming their attacks at the very essence of true Protestantism, viz. at the independence of the

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human conscience. They held that the corrupt nature of man makes him incapable of approaching, by his own exertions, towards a state of acceptance with God, or even of willing it with earnest desire; that he is entirely a slave in the hands of a Power outside himself. Hooker found himself called upon to do battle for the Church of England when it was assailed, on one side, by dangerous foes, who would destroy its doctrine and ritual by an appeal to the traditions of the Church of Rome, and protected on the other by these dangerous friends, who appealed to a vague but equally dangerous authority in support of their views. The Church of England seemed at that time to most men merely an institution which had resulted from accidental political circumstances; from the efforts of the Tudors to settle the disputed questions of the Reformation, or rather to still controversy, by upholding a church which, within certain limits, should be very tolerant. This was probably a true view of the nature of its growth, but whatever may have been the reasons of its establishment, Hooker, feeling the advantage and the justice of its wide tolerance both in ritual and doctrine, was enabled, by going deep into the foundations and actions of man's moral nature, to justify its existence on broad and fundamental principles. The Church of England being a successful compromise in practice, Hooker could justify this compromise in theory by reference to the complexity of human nature, and to the wide and true principles on which all true compromise rests. He showed that man was indeed obedient to authority, but not to any one authority; that as his nature was complex, so the authorities he obeyed were complex; that in supernatural matters of belief and of faith he was the creature of God, and taught by revelation; but that in matters of church organisation, matters too small for God to be concerned with, he was to direct himself by the law of nature as it was revealed to him by reason. He showed that this law of nature as revealed to man by reason was what guided the conduct of individuals of societies, and of the relations of societies among themselves. He justified thus the organisation and ritual of the Church of England, and the action of man's reason and will within the sphere of religion and morality.

The immediate cause of his books of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, "a treatise in which I intend a justification of the laws of our ecclesiastical polity," was the controversy in which he found himself engaged with Travers, who, with Cartwright, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, represented the Calvinists, and

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with whom he came in contact after his appointment to the Mastership of the Temple in 1584-5. Through Jewel, whose influence had enabled him to become a student at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, he became known to Sandys, Bishop of London, by whom he was appointed to preach at St. Paul's Cross in 1581. This was his first appearance in public, and after it he became gradually drawn into that controversy which made the business of his life. Although Hooker had come under Calvinistic influence in the course of his education, he had always refused to be driven into the narrow Calvinistic creed: his width of mind caused him to revolt against Calvinistic narrowness: and Travers, who preached at the Temple in the afternoon, after Hooker had preached there in the morning, made his sermons an attack on Hooker's latitudinarianism. Whitgift having silenced the public expression of Travers' opinion, it became a personal controversy between Hooker and Travers: and even Hallam, who calls these most important religious controversies, vulgar quarrels, and those engaged in them, "caitiff brawlers," is compelled to admit that this controversy was carried on with the utmost decency and good sense. Hooker is not only like "the knight of romance," who descends from higher spheres to cope with an adversary of the ordinary world; but Travers, although narrower and in every way inferior to Hooker, shows a keenness and shrewdness of thought which dignified successful opposition to him, and at the same time displayed a self-control and a respect for his adversary, which did equal credit to both sides. The deep thought into which this controversy plunged Hooker led him to ask the bishop of London for a quiet appointment which would allow him to complete it at leisure. "I am weary, my lord, of the noise and opposition of this place; and indeed, God and nature did not intend me for contention, but for study and quietness." In his retirement at Boscombe, near Salisbury, he finished four out of the proposed eight books on the *Ecclesiastical Polity;* in 1595 he moved to a better living near Canterbury, where he wrote the remainder of his work, and remained till his death in 1600.

The first Book, "On Laws in General," is the most important from the literary point of view, as containing the best specimens of the drift of Hooker's thought and the best specimens of his prose. The second Book refutes the principle that Scripture is the exclusive rule of human conduct. The third Book deals with "The Laws concerning Ecclesiastical Polity, whether the form thereof be in Scripture so set down that no addition or

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change is lawful." The fourth Book, "with the general exceptions taken against the laws of our polity as being Popish, and banished out of certain Reformed Churches." The fifth, larger than all the rest put together, deals with the laws that concern the public religious duties of the Church and manner of ordaining order. The sixth deals with the power of jurisdiction which the Church claims over lay-elders, a question which had been much agitated among the Puritans,—Cartwright in 1570 having published a work which established in theory a supreme disposition of the Church over the lay-world in general, holding that the State existed for the mere purpose of carrying out the decrees of the Church. The seventh deals "with the power, and honour annexed thereunto, in bishops." The eighth, "with the power of ecclesiastical dominion or supreme authority, which with us the highest governor or prince hath, as well in regard of domestical jurisdiction as of that other foreignly claimed by the bishop of Rome." The Introduction is concerned with the nature of all laws, in order to make clear what is the special nature of that law which governs the Church of England in her ritual and discipline. He begins by saying that his task is hard; that it is far more easy to raise a feeling for new institutions than to popularise the old; that the difficulty of his task will be increased by the difficulty of his reasoning and arguments, for his aim being to criticise the foundation of law, he will be concerned with a thing hidden to most people. Law, which he defines as a directive rule to goodness of operation, governs all intelligent working, and therefore the working of God himself. The law which God from the beginning hath set to himself to do all things by, has for end a reason of his will, for all things which God does have some end; for instance, God created woman, for he saw that it would not be well if she were not created. Often no reason is known to us, but that should never make us doubt the goodness and the greatness of the end which God hath proposed to himself; "the book of this law we are neither worthy nor able to look into and open . . . that little whereof which we darkly apprehend, we admire; the rest with religious ignorance we humbly and meekly adore." Besides this law, in which we are to have Faith, though its aim is hidden from us, there is (1) the law which unconscious natural agents obey; (2) the law which rules heavenly beings beyond our sphere; (3) the law of nature discoverable by reason, which directs the conduct of individuals, societies, and of the relation of societies among themselves; and lastly, the divine law, which reveals supernatural things and

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supplements that part of the law of nature which human reason alone cannot discover.[1]

Nature is nothing else but God's instrument. "He made a law for the rain. He gave his decree unto the sea that the waters should not pass his commandment;" and in a passage which shows his command over language, he asks what would become of the world if nature failed in her obedience. "Now, if nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own laws; if those principal and mother elements of the world, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should lose the qualities which they now have; if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, and by irregular volatility turn themselves any way as it might happen; if the prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should, as it were, through a languishing faintness, begin to stand and to rest himself; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away as children at the withered breasts of their mother, no longer able to yield them relief; what could become of man himself whom these now do all serve? See we not plainly that obedience of creatures unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world." But swervings, at least what appear to us to be swervings, are sometimes incidental unto the course of nature; for we must always remember that there are two laws to which all things are subject,—first, the law "which directs them in the means whereby they tend to their own perfection"; and secondly, "the law which binds them each to serve unto other's good, ... and all to prefer the good of the whole before whatsoever their own particular . . . as we plainly see they do, when things natural in that regard forget their ordinary natural wont; that which is heavy mounting sometime upward of its own accord and forsaking the centre of the earth, which to itself is most natural, even as if it did hear itself commanded to let go the good it

[1] It should be noticed, as Mr. Church points out, that the term Law of Nature is used by Hooker in three senses, applying it equally to the law of creation, the law which God has set to himself to do all things by; to the law governing unconscious natural agents; and to the law of human nature discoverable by reason.

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privately wisheth and to relieve the present distress of nature in common."

And after having spoken of the law of angels in a tone of fervent religious enthusiasm, "lifting up our eyes (as it were) from the footstool to the throne of God . . . to consider a little the state of heavenly and divine creatures . . . spirits immaterial and intellectual, the glorious inhabitants of those sacred palaces, where nothing but light and blessed immortality, no shadow of matter for tears, discontentment, grief, and uncomfortable passions to work upon, but all joy, tranquillity, and peace, even for ever and ever, doth dwell,"—Hooker goes on to discuss the nature of the law by which men direct their conduct, both as individuals, in relation to one another as members of a society, and the laws which determine relation of societies among themselves. "In all things," he says, "there is an appetite or desire, whereby they incline to something which they may be; and when they are it, they shall be perfecter than now they are." All these perfections are comprehended under the term goodness: it includes, first, the general perfection which all things seek in desiring continuance of their being; secondly, that perfection which each thing cultivates in imitating resemblance to God,—immutability and exactness. In following these instincts man is following the law of nature. But besides these laws which man unconsciously obeys, there are other laws which man observes; these laws are equally part of the law of nature, but obedience to them is not instructive; they are discoverable by reason. Reason gives us a knowledge of truth and teaches us what is the law that we are to observe: our will makes us follow that law: our will makes us pursue that virtue which reason points out. "And of discerning goodness there are but these two ways; the one the knowledge of causes whereby it is made such, the other the observation of those signs and tokens, which being annexed always unto goodness, argue that where they are found there also goodness is, although we know not the cause by force whereof it is there." Some of the signs and general tokens of good are found "in the general persuasion of men so accounting it." As St. Augustine says, there are some things which stand as principles universally agreed upon, and that out of those principles, which are in themselves evident, the greatest moral duties we owe towards God or man may without any great difficulty be concluded. And of some goodness the grounds are clear and manifest without proof; as for instance, axioms or principles such as this: "that the greater good is to be chosen

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before the less," and axioms less general, but so apparent that they need no proof, as "God is to be worshipped, parents to be honoured, others to be used by us as we would be used by them."

Yet the will does not always follow what reason points out to be good; "but let not any man think that this doth make any thing for the just excuse of iniquity; it cannot be done without the singular disgrace of nature, and the utter disturbance of that divine order whereby the pre-eminence of chiefest acceptation is by the best things worthily challenged." Sometimes it happens because "we are abused with the show of that which is not; sometimes the subtlety of Satan inveigling us as it did with Eve; . . . sometimes the very custom of evil making the heart obdurate against whatsoever instructions to the contrary, as in them over whom our Saviour spake, weeping, 'O Jerusalem, how often, and they wouldst not,' but when they are broken it is to the singular disgrace of nature, and God as the author of the laws of nature is their avenger."

Then Hooker shows how reason doth lead men into the making of human laws, "whereby politic societies are governed, and to agreement about laws whereby the fellowship of communion of independent societies standeth," and proceeds, in order to show the nature of these laws, to investigate the origin of society. Society is a "union brought about by natural inclination in order to supply the defects and imperfections which are in us living solely and singly. . . . The manner of this union was either expressly or secretly agreed upon, the first and primary law being that every individual was so to frame his outward actions that they be no hindrance to the common good for which the society was instituted." Observe, says Hooker, the progress that the world has made since the institution of society; "we, indeed, make complaint of the iniquity of our times, and not unjustly, for the days are evil; but compare them with those times wherein there were no civil societies, with those times wherein there was as yet no manner of public regiment established, with those times wherein there were not above eight persons righteous living upon the face of the earth,—and we have surely good cause to think that God hath blessed us exceedingly, and hath made us behold most happy days." All public regiment of "what kind soever seemeth evidently to have risen from deliberate advice, consultation, and compositions between men judging it convenient and behoveful, . . . without which consent there was no reason that one man should take upon him to be lord or judge over another; because, although

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there be, according to the opinion of some very great and judicious men, a kind of natural right in the noble, wise, and virtuous to govern them which are of servile disposition, nevertheless, for manifestation of this their right, and men's more peaceable contentment on both sides, the assent of them who are to be governed seemeth necessary." This was the slight and insufficient foundation of that celebrated theory of the "Original Contract," a theory which, enlarged by Hobbes and Locke, played such a large and important part in political controversies. It served to oppose the theory of divine right of kings, first formulated by James I., and extended by Filmer.

This theory of a prehistoric race who drew up the Original Contract, "who saw that to live by one man's will became the cause of all men's misery," and that no potentate can justly make laws unless by express command from God or by consent of those governed, not only served to fight the intellectual battle against the theory of royal tyranny, but gave the first suggestions of a theory of representation; for "to be commanded we do consent when that society whereof we are part hath at any time before consented without revoking the same after by the like universal agreement." If we are bound by our representatives in the past we can be bound by our representatives in the present and in the future. Thus, in Hooker's theory of political and social law, we see the germ of a political philosophy. "Happy is the nation," it is said, "which has no political philosophy, for such philosophy is generally the offspring of the symptoms of an approaching revolution." The causes of the further development of political theory were found in the troubled times which preceded the Revolutions of 1642 and 1688. In order to oppose Filmer's theory of the divine right of kings, of a tyranny which was lawful because it was exercised by God's delegate, this theory of the "Original Contract" was extended and developed. The king, by his despotism, was violating the agreement that had been made between governor and governed in this prehistoric time. It was a weak theory, indeed, having no hold, as the other one had, over religiously disposed minds; but it was one which served to support the practice of the developed national will, which required more and more that attention and regard should be paid to its interests, till in 1688 it triumphed, and the theory of Divine Right disappeared for ever.

Also belonging to the law of nature discoverable by reason is the law regulating the conduct of societies between themselves,

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—the primary being concerned with nations in time of peace, rules concerning ambassadors, etc., the secondary with the rules of war. The strength and virtue of the law of nations are such that no particular nation can lawfully prejudice the same by any of their several laws and ordinances, more than a man, by his private resolutions, the law of the whole community. And in speaking of international society, Hooker shows his belief in the efficacy of councils as promoting national harmony, a belief so strong in the minds of many Elizabethans, who still believed that the harmony of thought and belief, which the Reformation had for ever upset, might be re-established on a reasonable and tolerant basis by the action of councils. "A grievous abuse there has been of councils," he says, probably thinking of the Council of Constance, of the Diet of Augsburg, of the Council of Trent, all of which, called upon to promote harmony in Christendom, had ended in a worse schism than those they were called upon to amend. "But this abuse should rather cause men to study how so gracious a thing may again be reduced to that first perfection, than in regard of stains and blemishes sithence growing be held for ever in extreme disgrace."

Hooker had before said that "the law of reason, considered as natural law, is not extended to contain in it all manner of laws whereunto reasonable creatures are bound, but is restrained to those only duties which all men, by force of natural wit, either do or might understand to be such duties as concern all men."

He now passes on to consider that law supernatural, of which the record and exponent is Scripture, and which, presupposing and embodying the law natural or rational, adds knowledge and guidance beyond it, and makes up for its default and completes it. This law directs man in his pursuit of that higher happiness, that estate whereby we attain the full possession of that which simply for itself is to be desired. This desire, though of such perfection, we are not capable of in this life, is as natural, though higher than the sensual and the intellectual, "for although the beauties, riches, honours, sciences, virtues, and perfections of all men living were in the present possession of one, yet somewhat beyond and above all this there would still be sought and earnestly thirsted for;" and thus the end being divine, the rules which aid us in its attainment are supernatural—first, in the means of delivering them by direct revelation from God, and secondly, in themselves, the things delivered being directly ordained by God. This law contains all things necessary to be known in order to be saved, which could not at all, or could not easily, be known

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by light of natural discourse. "It telleth us of certain things, presupposing certain principles, whereof it receiveth us already persuaded, and then instructeth us in all the residue necessary. In Scripture, besides the revelation of laws strictly supernatural, we find such natural laws as we could not easily have found out alone; also the application of certain laws in order to make them clearer, as, for instance, when it is not clear what the law of nature requires in certain circumstances." Then, in speaking of the benefit of having divine laws written, Hooker approaches the realm of controversy: having written record of divine commands, he says "we are in noways bound to yield to the traditions of Rome the same reverence that we do to written law;" for history and common-sense show us how report is maimed when it passes through several hands. The law of God contains things absolutely necessary unto salvation; and Scripture is the direct revelation of God's will: the fact that he ceased to speak to us after the New Testament was given us, is a sign that all things necessary to our salvation are sufficiently known, and those who add traditions, says Hooker, as a part of supernatural law and necessary truth, "have not the truth but are in error." Some things, indeed, are not expressly told us; but these things, which have not express literal mention, can be easily deduced from what he has told us. There may, perhaps, be some doubt how far to proceed by collection and deduction before the full and complete measure of things necessary to salvation be made up. Many of the Church's most important beliefs have been deduced, as the belief in the Trinity, the co-eternity of the Son with the Father, the duty of baptising. Of none of these is express mention made. "But," says Hooker, plunging into the controversy with a vigour which is perhaps not quite equalled by the reasonable force of his argument, "let *necessary* collection be made (*i.e.* of things necessary to salvation, a premise in itself vague and differing according to authority), and we may boldly deny that of all those things which at this day are with so great necessity urged upon this Church under the name of reformed church discipline, there is any one which these books hitherto have made manifest to be contained in Scripture." Thus he directly contradicts Cartwright, who laid down that "the discipline of Christ's Church, that is necessary for all time, is delivered by Christ and set down in Holy Scripture," and proceeds to strengthen his view by reference to the constitution of the Church. The Church is a society of two kinds—first, an ordinary civil society, constituted on the same grounds as any other civil society;

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secondly, it is a society supernatural. In the first case it is governed by laws which the men in that society agree to make—positive laws—laws not natural, in that they do not grow out of the unchangeable conditions originally imposed in the world, sometimes mutable, *i.e.* varying as to time and place. In the second case, as a society supernatural, it is governed by supernatural laws revealed directly from God. They, too, are positive laws, sometimes mutable and sometimes immutable, depending on the subject-matter to which they are applicable. They are concerned with the substance of the service of God, which, so far forth as it hath in it anything more than the law of reason doth teach, must be received from God himself. But the first sort of rules which concern the Church as a human society have to do, not with the substance of the service of God, but with outward rules and ordinances: these principles are indeed deduced from Scripture, but the laws themselves are imposed by man on himself. Nor is it illogical, considering the nature of the ecclesiastical society, to search the Scriptures for the ordering of these things; but it is to derogate from the reverend authority and dignity of Scripture, to go by the letter of Scripture in this respect, "no less than they do by whom Scriptures are in ordinary talk very idly applied unto vain and childish trifles."

Hooker's justification of the Church of England brought him no adherents from the Puritan side. He was unable to stop the great Puritan movement, to hinder the rise and predominance of the sect who searched the Scriptures for guidance in Church and personal affairs, whose talk was a mass of texts, or tinged with scriptural phraseology; but when the time of narrow religious warfare had passed, Hooker's ecclesiastical polity was taken as the foundation of the Anglican Church, the representative of the religious views of a great nation. He gave it a defensible theory, broad and intelligible, even if incomplete and open to attack. "He brought out the noble features of the system he defended: its fitness to be the Church of a great nation, its adaptation to human nature and society, the reasonableness of its customs, the largeness of its aims, the freedom and elevation of its spirit in principles and working." Whatever faults may be found in it from the point of view of the ideal institution, its adaptation to the needs of the English nation was evident. This was shown in the crisis of 1688. The nation, frightened by the result of their resistance to royal oppression in 1642,—a resistance which had resulted in worse tyranny, the despotism of Cromwell's military government,—were cowed and willing to endure any

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amount of civil tyranny; but when Charles II. interfered with the safety of the Church by the Test Act, when James II. showed his intention of ruining it by means of the dispensing power, then only the nation found the strength and will to resist, and brought about the movement of 1688, so vastly important in its political results.

In the wide and philosophical survey which Hooker takes in order to strengthen his theory of the Church, and in order to refute the Puritans, he argues sometimes from authority; and his arguments, even when not based on authority, are wanting in reason: but his work must be regarded as a whole. And it is evident that "his whole theory rests on the principle that the paramount and supreme guide both of will and human action is reason: and if we care to give him," says Mr. Church, "his 'fundamental position,' the key to his method of arguing, it is to be found in his doctrine, so pertinaciously urged and always implied, of the concurrence and co-operation, each in its due place, of all possible means of knowledge for man's direction." "To measure by any one kind of law all the actions of men were to confound the admirable order, wherein God hath disposed all laws each as in nature, so in degree distinct from the other." Thus to introduce the idea of complex law, to which man was obedient by the light of reason, was perhaps Hooker's greatest work. Before his time man was simply the slave of authority, a creature not free even in his aspirations. Hooker breathed the spirit of the Renaissance when he spoke of man's dignified obedience to a law which he recognised by his reason; and by introducing the idea of law into the sphere of moral and social thought, he gave one of the freest impulses to that line of thought which was to discover the reign of law in all departments of human life, that idea which is at the root of all progress both in intellectual and practical life. Hooker, with Bacon, was the first to suggest to the English the notion of evolution by law, which step by step, says an anonymous writer quoted by Mr. Kingsley in his essay *The Roman and the Teuton*, is transforming the whole field of our knowledge and opinion. "It is not one order of conception that comes under its influence; but it is the whole sphere of our ideas, and with them the whole system of our action and conduct. Not the physical world alone is now the domain of inductive science, but the moral, the intellectual, the spiritual are being added to its empire. Two co-ordinate ideas pervade the vision of every thinker—physicist or moralist, philosopher or priest. In the physical and moral world, in the natural

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and the human, are ever seen two forces, invariable rule and continual advance: law and action: order and progress: these two powers working harmoniously together, and the result, inevitable sequence, orderly movement, irresistible growth. In the physical world, indeed, order is most prominent to our eyes; in the moral world it is progress, but both exist as truly in the one as in the other. . . . It was the last task of the astronomer to show eternal change even in the grand order of the solar system. It is the crown of philosophy to see immutable law even in the complex action of human life."

And lastly, Hooker showed that prose-writing could be artistic while at the same time expressing the most complex and subtle thought. Ascham, Latimer, in language pleasing because it is simple, had expressed earnest thoughts; but in their mental life there was little complexity, and their manner of expression showed that they had no power of self-criticism—little power in the selection and ordering of thought. They are childish, sometimes garrulous, full of what they want to say with very little power of saying it.

Then came the reaction in the school of Lyly and his followers, when expression was everything, meaning nothing—when style in the best hands reached such a pitch that readers forgot to seek for a meaning, or were content with a very little one. There was frequently barely enough to give a *raison d'être* to the elaborate sentences and passages. Prose showed first what it could be in the hands of Hooker. It became a fully-developed instrument in his hands. It expressed thought which, in addition to being earnest, was profound and complex, with all the clearness and simplicity of Ascham and Latimer, and in a harmonious, well-proportioned, stately, and graceful style, which showed that Hooker had all the artistic perceptions of the Euphuists. He was not only suggestive of the possibilities of prose-writing in the English language: he was distinctly a prose-artist himself. "He not only opened the mine, but he explored the depths of our native eloquence. So stately and graceful is the march of his periods, so various the fall of the musical cadences upon the ear, so rich in images, so condensed in sentences, so grave and noble his diction, so little of vulgarity is there in his racy idiom, of pedantry in his learned phrase, that I know not," says Hallam, "whether any later writer has more admirably displayed the capacities of our language, or produced passages more worthy of comparison with the splendid monuments of antiquity." The cumbrousness of Elizabethan prose, the tendency to imitate Latin

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construction, the habit of putting into one long sentence with a variety of clauses what we should now make several sentences of, the disorganisation of the sentence which he sometimes indulged in with the view of putting the emphatic word in the most emphatic place, in order to render the argument clearer,—all these are but minor disadvantages which cannot detract from his great merits, his instinctive sense of the fitness of words to thought, his capacity of suiting his phrase to the intellectual mood, the enthusiasm and fervour of his eloquence. As Fuller says, it was only "where the copiousness of his style met not with proportionable capacity in his auditors that he was unjustly censured for perplext, tedious, and obscure. . . . Such as would patiently attend and give him credit all the reading and hearing of his sentences had their expectation ever paid at the close thereof." As for the charm of his style, its harmony and grace, its capacities for delicacy and grandeur, it has not only procured for him the admiration of Swift, who singles him out with Parsons, the Jesuit, as the master of a style simple and natural, which could be read without offence in the days of Addison, but it procured the full recognition of the Puritan age in which he lived, which, finding in it a proof of his undue regard for culture in its study of form, in its classical allusions and quotations, made it the subject of sneer and ridicule.

Therefore not only in the history of thought, but as a master of what constitutes true literature, the art of giving adequate and attractive expression to thought, Hooker has claims to lasting fame.

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CHAPTER XIV.

ELIZABETHAN THOUGHT IN SCIENCE.

BACON, Francis, *b.* 1560-1 ; studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1573 ; entered at Gray's Inn, 1576 ; admitted as barrister, 1582 ; sat in Parliament as member for Melcombe Regis, 1584 ; trial of Essex and Southampton, 1600-1 ; knighted by James I., 1603 ; marriage, 1606 ; made Solicitor-General, 1607 ; made Attorney-General, 1613 ; made a Privy Councillor, 1616 ; made Lord Keeper, 1616-7 ; made Lord Chancellor, 1617-8 ; created Baron Verulam, 1618 ; created Viscount St. Alban, 1620-1 ; sentenced by the House of Lords, 1621 ; *d.* 1626.
Advancement of Learning, 1605 ; *Novum Organum*, 1620 ; *History of Henry VII.*, 1622 ; *Historia Naturalis et Experimentalis*, 1622 ; Three editions of the *Essays*, 1597, 1612, 1625.

THE name of Bacon is as important in the history of Elizabethan literature as is that of Shakspere. Bacon, like Shakspere, was part of the "soul of his age." He also embodied the spirit of the Renaissance, which urged men not only to the development and exercise of the faculties, but to the study of the world and of the conditions of human life. It stimulated them to make those enquiries which can alone render progress possible, for it is the systematic study of nature which makes a higher future for man a tangible and attainable thing. Scientific knowledge alone can give man that power over nature necessary to the highest civilisation, necessary too to the highest art, "the spirit and pure breath of knowledge." Bacon by his method, by his endeavour to discover the laws which govern the workings of nature, began the great scientific work of the modern world. Actual knowledge he did not give us, but he pointed out the path which all discoverers have followed.

Even if Bacon's name was not famous as coming first in the great list of English scientific workers, he would yet have a claim to the interest of posterity, through his more purely literary work and because of his strange and puzzling personality. A typical Elizabethan in his vigorous versatility, in his varied career at

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once practical and literary, he stood above his great age in virtue of his gigantic intellectual power, but below it in his cold, passionless nature, incapable of the generous impulses of the later Elizabethans, and incapable of understanding the high ideal morality of the earlier. —— 333

"My conceit of his person was never increased towards him by his place or his honours; but I have and do reverence him for the greatness that was only proper to himself: in that he seemed to me ever, by his work, one of the greatest men and most worthy of admiration that had been in many ages. In his adversity I ever prayed that God would give him strength, for greatness he could not want." Thus speaks Ben Jonson; in moral greatness he may be wanting; in intellectual greatness, "by his work," he will ever be one of the greatest and most admirable of men.

Francis Bacon was the son of a statesman, who was a fit representative of the race of politicians that came midway between the overbearing and imperious race of Hotspurs, Cliffords, and Nevilles, and the dashing but more statesmanlike race represented by Essex and Raleigh. "Nicholas Bacon," says Macaulay, "was deliberate, diplomatic, sincere but not zealous, resolute but often apparently vacillating, speculative, yet in actual life no man more free from theory." Such men as he, Mildmay, Burghley, and Walsingham, were admirably adapted to carry England through the critical years of the early part of Elizabeth's reign, when a tortuous, apparently irresolute policy was required to maintain her independence amidst the designs of a threatening Europe. Francis Bacon was born at a time when this policy was of all others most called for. In 1562 the Council of Trent, unsuccessful in what efforts it made to reunite a profoundly divided Christendom, had broken up. In 1566-7 happened the revolt of the Netherlands, the execution of Counts Egmont and Horn; in 1572 was the Massacre of St. Bartholomew: what wonder then that Bacon, from inheritance and early experience, conceived the idea that a turning and twisting and tortuous policy was a necessity in the dealings of states and men; for only the dubiously sincere policy of Elizabeth's statesman could, by allowing England to take neither side openly, have steered her safely through these difficulties.

This endeavour to gain support from both sides, while belonging to neither, is painfully evident in Bacon's political career. In 1584 he represented Melcombe Regis in the House of Commons, and endeavoured to play the very difficult game of obtain-

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ing the favour of both king and people. It was on the delicate question of subsidies that Bacon first came forward prominently and posed as a popular champion. The Court had asked for supplies. Bacon opposed them in a speech on a motion for a grant of three subsidies to be payable in four years. "We are here to search the wounds of the realm and not to skim them over," he says, "to grant subsidies at once will be to breed discontent and endanger her Majesty's safety,"—it will be a bad precedent for popular liberties. But Bacon found that the philosophic mind which sees two sides to things was then out of place in politics. His speech was resented by the Queen; but once more in 1597 he speaks on the Liberal side in Parliament against enclosures: this was the last time he ever appeared in opposition to Government. He now began that study of self-interest which ended in his becoming "a peremptory royalist." In 1593 and 1595, having sued unsupported, and therefore unsuccessfully, first for the post of Attorney- and then for that of Solicitor-General, he turned to Essex, who was then just rising, and in whom Bacon, with characteristic sagacity, saw the promise of success. Essex, who seems to have recognised the greatness of Bacon, made him in 1795 a present of an estate to console him for his disappointment. The *Device* which he wrote for Essex on this occasion seems to show real gratitude and friendship; but his conduct in Essex's trial in 1601 seems to show how subordinate a place friendship held in his mind in comparison with his cherished worldly aims. In this little treatise he draws the character of a hollow statesman, prophetic with an irony which Fate has made to recoil on the author. "Let him make himself cunning in the humours and drifts of persons more than in the nature of business and affairs . . . and ever let him take the side that is likeliest to be followed." Perhaps Bacon himself was shocked at first with the moral dangers of a successful political career. Although on James's accession he tried to obtain his favour, although he gladly accepted knighthood from him, yet he says: "I desire to meddle as little as possible in the King's causes: I desire to put my ambition wholly upon my pen." But his talents were now well known, particularly his genius for public speaking, to which Ben Jonson bears such admiring testimony. "There happened in my time," he says, "one noble speaker who was full of gravity in his speaking. His language when he could spare or pass by a jest was nobly censorious. No man ever spoke more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered." Often, therefore, was he chosen to

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be spokesman for the House of Commons when in conference with the Lords: his diplomatic talent, to use no worse an adjective, had made the road to power easy to him. He became successively Solicitor-General, Member for the University of Cambridge, Privy Councillor, Lord Keeper, Lord Chancellor, being made in 1618 Lord Verulam, in 1620 Viscount St. Albans. Even his disgrace and fall in 1620, when the charges against him of taking money for despatch of suits were investigated and proved, when he wrote "the humble submission of me, the Lord Chancellor," could not quench his ambition. His imprisonment being ended by a pardon under the Great Seal, he retired in 1621; but in 1623 he sued, though unsuccessfully, for the Provostship of Eton, and even when convinced by this failure that further worldly success was denied him, yet, by the grandeur of his residence, by the splendour of his living, even when in what he termed "his retirement," he showed that the world and its "vanities" had still vast attractions for him. "Do what we can," says Prince Charles, "this man refuses to go out like a snuff."

To disentangle Bacon's political views from the facts of his self-interested and chequered career is impossible. We have to refer to his essays, those autobiographical notes of his life, sincere and genuine as statements of his thought, "set down significantly rather than curiously," sometimes showing the unconsideredness of impulse in their inconsistency. We gather from them that Bacon's one fundamental political object was national unity. All his minor political aims centre round this one great object. In Bacon's political creed we see not only the well-considered belief of a thoughtful statesman, but also, on one point at least, the expression of the national instinct. National unity, he held, was only to be preserved by war: war was to the body politic what exercise was to the human body: war alone could give that health to the country which would ensure in its constitution the harmonious working of all members of the body politic. Bacon was no upholder of despotism: he believed firmly in the symmetry of the constitution, which consists in the mutual beneficial action of King and Commons. Balance was everything to Bacon. In the predominance of the French nobility over the middle class he saw possibilities of danger which the future only too soon realised. Each class in the body politic was to move freely within its own sphere: predominance was to be given to none. The King was like the sun, a heavenly body, moving round another heavenly body which it benefits. And

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Bacon in practice was always true to this theory. He never systematically objected to Parliaments: he always recommended the King to summon them: he attributed their failure to the fact that they were not rightly treated. The Parliament ought to be considered as a council, consisting of the clergy, the Lords, and the Commons: it should be summoned by the King to hear and discuss plans and propositions. "What touches ourself shall be last served," this ought to be the motto of the King in his dealings with Parliament. But Parliament was never to take the initiative: it was to be the servant and counsellor, though a willing one, of the King. Bacon especially lamented the struggles, characteristic of this political epoch, which took place on the questions of supply: he objected to the great constitutional principle, "redress of grievances must precede supply," as involving no essential connection. Parliament must not be a place where the King barters away the chips of the royal prerogative: the King's prerogative is law, and the principal part of law; if he wishes for money it is the duty of the Parliament to grant it without demanding redress of grievances as a right. Of the nature of the constitutional struggle which was gradually transferring power from King to Parliament Bacon had no conception. He found ideal unity in his theory of the balance of the then existing forces of the constitution, and to preserve this unity was the object of political action. Parliament was not to encroach on the King, nor the King on Parliament: Parliament must not make objections to furnishing the King with supplies, but the King must not be exorbitant in his demands. The strength and greatness of a country can never co-exist with heavy taxation. "The blessing of Judah and Issachar will never meet: that the same nation should be both the lion's whelp and the ass between burdens." The strength and greatness of a country depend on its capacity for war, for that alone can give it the needful exercise, that alone can prevent civil war. And in advocating war Bacon was but following a national instinct. England, like some of the other states of Europe, had just formally emancipated herself from the control, both temporal and ecclesiastical, of the Papacy. She had had throughout Elizabeth's reign great difficulty in preserving her national independence; she had only succeeded by pursuing a cautious and diplomatic defensive policy. At the end of Elizabeth's reign she found herself the champion in Europe of a new system, the head of a Protestant system of states, thoroughly independent in government and religion. The old system was still powerful: it was the duty of the new system

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now to make itself felt by an aggressive policy: England was strong enough for this aggressive policy, which had been begun in the brilliant aggressive expeditions of Essex and Raleigh against Spain, the representative of the old system. With the overthrow of the Papacy in Europe went also the old idea of the regulation of the international relations of countries; there was no longer even any nominal arbiter of international affairs, neither a system of embassies nor the codification of international custom to act as law had yet begun. In this transitorial condition, when states were expanding, when the old system represented by Spain (still powerful in reality and far more formidable in men's imagination) was struggling against the new system represented by England, war was inevitable; it was only thus that the permanent relations of states could be settled; it was the only means that either system had of spreading its influence. Bacon, therefore, by his theory of the body politic, and the exercise necessary to keep it in health, was unconsciously formulating the political philosophy of the time. In his vast ideas of the foundation of a monarchy of the West, which the King might achieve by following a grand foreign policy, which would have for its object the colonising of the wilds of Scotland, the civilising of Ireland, the annexation of the Low Countries, he was but putting into practical words the political ideal of his time, the vision of Spenser, the ideal England of Shakspere and Milton. Later Bacon lost sight of his great ideas; he had devoted himself to the service of James; he had forged for himself fetters which had chained down his soul, and which he could not shake off; he saw himself helpless in the obedience of a king whose great object of ambition was the Spanish marriage.

The inherent weakness in Bacon's character, which in all other spheres as well as in this made his practice so divergent from his theory, is not explained merely by reference to the ordinary motives of self-interest, but has a far different and a far more complicated cause. If we can accept the theory that Bacon believed himself to have a mission, that he believed himself destined to accomplish great things in the field of knowledge for mankind, that he saw that his only way to do this was by filling a post which should give him influence with men, by devoting himself to the service of the great of this world, who could help him on with this scheme; if we accept this theory —and there is every reason that we should do so, for Bacon was as sincere as he was often inconsistent in his statements con-

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cerning himself—we must not pass sentence on him till we have judged him by the exceptional standards he set up for himself; and then we shall find an explanation, though by no means an excuse, for the course of his life, which appears at first sight so contemptible, so morally common. Bacon's great object in life was entirely different from that of most people: he had no desire to save his own soul; he had no fervent belief in and love for a God; he had no fervent belief in or fondness for any human being to give him a motive power in life; he had no poetic and ideal enthusiasm for humanity; no belief of the ordinary kind was a power over his conduct. But the belief that had influence over his life, that gave him ideas of duty, was this, that by devotion to the cause of knowledge, he might achieve one of the greatest things that life and the world could offer. Next to Shakspere among great Elizabethans stands Bacon. "Art, the spirit and finer breath of life," reached its highest point in our great dramatist, but the discovery of truth concerning the conditions of man's life, concerning his place in nature, was the cherished aim of Bacon's existence: he lived his highest life when struggling to advance this aim. "Truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the enquiry of truth (which is the love-making or wooing of it), the knowledge of truth (which is the presence of it), the belief of truth (which is the enjoying of it), is the sovereign good of human nature." "What is comparable," he says, "to standing on the vantage ground of truth, a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene." To reach this hill many a slough must be passed, and if Bacon left the ordinary paths of morality what wonder that he lost himself hopelessly in them. If we, then, give up entirely the idea that Bacon was an ordinary man and to be judged by ordinary standards, we can look more calmly, though not with approval, on his conduct in the two principal crises of his life.

In the career of Essex, says Macaulay, we see exemplified that struggle for court patronage, which came midway between the political struggles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Essex—brave, high-spirited, generous, bold in his attitude towards his sovereign, delicate towards his dependants—was eminently the successful statesman of the period. Friendship, not gratitude, was what he desired from those below him: this is what we have every reason to believe Bacon, as far as lay in his nature, gave him: and he in turn was fascinated and dazzled by the powers of Bacon. Baffled in his attempts to befriend him by

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giving him responsible posts, he is careful, on leaving England in 1596 for Spain, to commend his interests to his friends. But in 1598 came the quarrel between Essex and the Queen, which had been growing for some time before. His popularity generally was on the wane: the Queen was annoyed with his arrogant and bold manners towards her: he was scornfully defiant to her and to his enemies: and he crowned all by a career of failure in Ireland, which he governed shamefully, displaying all the defects that a statesman could possess. The Court at last ceased to give him credit for the virtues he could claim: they hindered him in his brilliant and really politic exploits against Spain, of which the affair of Cadiz was an example. Bacon stood by Essex and served him as long as he could do it without injury to himself. He had tried to dissuade him from accepting the government of Ireland, knowing that his impulsiveness and want of caution could not fail to bring him thus prominently into trouble: and when his anticipations were fulfilled and Essex returned in disgrace, Bacon did his best to mediate between him and the Queen, and experienced the reward of most mediators: Essex thought him wanting in zeal as a friend, Elizabeth wanting in duty as a subject. Thus, when Essex was brought before the Council to answer for his conduct in Ireland, Bacon, after a faint attempt to excuse himself, appeared in support of the charge against the Earl, and when Essex, reckless with despair, conspires against the Queen, Bacon appears as counsel for the prosecution. In these circumstances three courses were open to Bacon: if he had been an enthusiastic friend, believing above all other things in the sacredness of the tie of friendship, he would have firmly stood by Essex, supporting him when he was right, palliating his conduct when wrong: he might, secondly, have been neutral, and this, considering Bacon's nature and his aims in life, would have been the most disgraceful course. The third course was the one which he actually did pursue, and one quite in accordance with his theory of life. Friendship to him was an important thing and an elevated thing. "Whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast and not from humanity": but friendships are contracted but for the mutual interests of either party. "A principal part of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness of the heart which passions of all kinds do cause and induce . . . no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend: to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon

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the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession." One wonders rather what reception Bacon would have given to a friend who came to him for the like "civil shrift or confession." And besides this first noble part of friendship there are two others, support of the judgment, and the last part "which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels, aid and bearing a part in all actions and occasions."

"But," says Bacon, "although friendship has these many noble uses, let us always remember the precept of Bias, that we must ever treat a friend, remembering that some day he may become an enemy." Now Bacon had enjoyed with Essex friendship of what he considered the purest kind, the friendship of dependant and superior when there can be no jealousy, but mutual benefits conferred; but when Essex forfeited the Queen's favour, and thus endangered Bacon's position as his friend, with regard to the Queen, was not Bacon justified, according to his own peculiar theory of life, in casting off his friend? For had not Essex become his enemy: if Bacon had not taken active steps to put himself on the other side, would not Essex have lost for Bacon the hope of attaining his life's desire, his aim of advancing the kingdom of man over nature, that great work which he thought would end futilely without the co-operation of the great? He says of Essex, fourteen years after, speaking of the beginning of their friendship, "I held at that time my Lord to be the fittest instrument to do good to the state, and therefore I applied myself to him in a manner which I think rarely happeneth among men." When Essex could no longer serve a purpose—indeed when he became dangerous to that purpose—Bacon had no scruple in throwing him over. And we cannot render his conduct more amiable in our eyes by thinking that it cost him any effort: for little place, and very little hold on his heart had the feelings for his fellow-beings. "The stage is more beholding to love than the life of man. . . . In life," he says, "it does much mischief. They do best, who, if they cannot but admit love, make it keep quarter and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life. For if it check once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes—maketh men that they can no-wise be true to their own ends." "The best works and of greatest merit for the public have proceeded from the unmarried and childless men . . . yet," he adds, with a desire to do justice to this side of life, "certainly wife and children are a discipline of humanity, because they make frequent and strong calls upon tenderness." Probably then, Bacon, so destitute of the larger emotional life, had little

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compunction in giving up his friend. He is actually vindictive in his treatment of him at the trial. He compares him, in his speech, to Pisistratus, who by exhibiting self-inflicted wounds had established tyranny at Athens: thus he crushes Essex's one plea in defence of his conduct—a plea which, if taken up, might have procured him at least a pardon, viz. that the powerful and inveterate enemies surrounding him had just ruined him in the Queen's favour; that their persecutions had driven him into the despair which urged him to his reckless deeds. And when Essex reproaches him, Bacon answers him with shuffling inconsistency, confused by the intellectual difficulties of the part he had undertaken, but showing no remorse for the friendship he had killed and the friend he was about to ruin. All he ever did by way of excusing himself was to say, in succeeding ages, that the arguments of his "Declaration of the Practices and Reasons attempted and committed by Robert, Earl of Essex," had all been furnished by Government. This, then, was what friendship meant to the philosopher, who used life and the things of the world, not like the equally selfish mystic of the Middle Ages, as a means to save his own soul, but as a means to reach the kingdom of truth, and to spread its clear serene light over the world. Thus did Bacon, by his morigeration, by his study of the worst side of human nature, by his endeavour to subordinate life and people to his own ends, sell his soul to the devil more emphatically even than did Faust. So dim did he render his moral consciousness, that he failed in one of the great crises of his life to recognise even intellectually the broadest distinction between right and wrong. In the year 1620, following on the impeachment of Sir Silas Mompesson and Sir Francis Mitchell, there was appointed a Committee of the Lower House to examine into the state of justice. Various cases of bribery were exposed, and by the mouth of one of its members it was stated that "the person against whom these things are alleged is no less than the Lord Chancellor, a man so endued with all parts both of nature and art, as that I will say no more of him, not being able to say enough." This enquiry had been instituted at the instance of a suitor in Chancery, who had experienced ruin through the delays of the Court. He received a hint that £100 judiciously disposed would quicken matters. He borrowed the money at high interest. The Chancellor took the money, but the decree passed against him. This charge was only one out of twenty-three cases, in which the Chancellor was found guilty of having accepted money: but his astonishment at the result of the

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enquiry, his interest in the summonses and the dealings of the Parliament, which impeached the other two officers of the Crown,—proceedings which, if he had been conscious of guilt, would have made him nervous,—plainly prove that his moral consciousness had ceased to show him the difference between right and wrong, that his conduct was the result of moral blindness, and not of the expectation of not being detected. Also, it was probably true that the sums he received were more of the nature of gifts than of bribes: we have no evidence that they influenced Bacon in his sentences; they may, however, have had great influence on the despatch of business, on the order of the cases. When the consequences of his course of action were made plain to Bacon, he behaved with all that abjectness and want of dignity which is inseparable from moral commonness, after vainly trying first to work upon the fears of the King, then on those of his officers, then of his advisers, pointing out the danger of this accusation as a precedent. "Upon advised consideration of the charges, descending into my own conscience, and calling my memory to account so far as I am able, I do plainly and ingenuously confess that I am guilty of corruption, and do renounce all defence," adding "Be merciful to a broken reed," and concluding with an inconsistency apparent, not real: "I was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years: but it was the justest censure in Parliament that was these two hundred years."

Bacon's career is made sadder to us by reading the *Essays*, because in them we find traces of those purer feelings which he had done all he could to crush. At the end of his life he might feel that love and friendship and feeling for children were but the discipline of humanity—that the man who best advanced the kingdom of Truth was he who had no ties; but at the beginning of his career, before he was so well disciplined in the art of advancement of life, must he not have felt sincerely what he says in his essay on "Friendship": "For a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love." Then perhaps he realised that it might be hard to renounce the world for the sake of science; but he says it is a weakness, "the solecism of power, to think to command the end, and yet not to endure the mean." The furtherance of truth was his end, the discovery of the unity of nature, and to science he devoted himself till he all but killed the human nature inside him. Science was his religion, the regulator of his morality. She was the one power over his conduct. What often was called religion was with him a cold belief,

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useful for political purposes, to be kept apart from science, disconnected with morality. The principles of religion ought not to be discussed; if Faith and Reason come into collision, Reason must give way. He speaks of science as the handmaid of religion, not in the sense of waiting upon her in order to explain what is obscure in her teachings and her prophecies, but as having to succumb if there came a conflict between her and revelation. Naturally, thus divorcing Faith and Reason, he is led into inconsistency. He says at one moment that God has set the world in the heart of man in order that he may find it out; yet again he says that all human things are full of ingratitude and treachery. At one moment he recognises the divinity in man; at another he calls him but a mass of sin and corruption. His theology sits exceedingly loosely on him. He thinks that the first principles of theology were laid down by the Church out of Scripture, but his anxiety that science should not seek support out of Scripture is obvious. At the same time he is careful to show how impossible it is that learning should make men atheists, for by its help man can find out the ordinances and decrees by which God makes the world beautiful and decent, and thus is eventually taught to regard with faith and awe the supreme and summary law of nature which cannot be found out. "Men cannot fly on the waxen wings of the senses" to discover the secrets of the Deity. Of atheists he has the utmost abhorrence and contempt. "God," he says, "never wrought miracles to convince atheism, because his ordinary works convince it." "It is true that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion. For while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity." It is inherent in man to worship a God. "The most savage of tribes take part with the subtlest philosophers in the worship of Him." The causes of atheism he finds in scandal of priests, in profane scoffing, in too much prosperity.

But his theology gives him no directions for daily conduct. Its practical use is to organise a religion which shall be of service to the state. Religion must give to a state that internal unity which its government and its geographical limits represent externally. Religious unity is peculiar to those peoples who worship the one, true, and therefore jealous God. The fruits of unity are externally, freedom from scandal; internally, peace.

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"The bounds of unity should be defined, not after the fashion of Jehu, nor after the fashion of the Laodicean, but moderately and impartially; needless controversies are often caused on petty points." To Bacon, disunion in religion implied a disunited England, a helpless prey to foreign despotism and foreign superstition. He held that the differences between High Churchmen and Puritans should be settled entirely with reference to the good of the nation. To him it was only on indifferent points of ceremony and orthodoxy that they differed. Every effort should be made to bring about peace. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;" and he says in deprecation of the Puritan point of view, "I could never find but that God hath left the like liberty to church government as he hath done to civil government, to be varied according to the time, place, and accidents, which nevertheless his high and divine Providence doth order and dispose." Why should the civil state be subject to reform, and the ecclesiastical state receive no alteration? "A contentious retaining of custom is a turburlent thing." Yet Bacon is not wholly averse to the Puritans: their tendency to assimilate the Church to the reformed Churches of Europe seemed to him to be a means of increasing England's political influence; it might help the State in founding that great monarchy of the West which was one of Bacon's political dreams. The Church, he says, concluding his essay on religious unity, should be like Christ's coat, which had no seam.

If Bacon is intolerant of atheism as tending to ecclesiastical and therefore political disunion, he is much more intolerant of superstition; for superstition was represented to him by the Church of Rome, the type of all that threatened national independence and national unity. It was not to him "a glorious style of weakness," as to Lord Brooke. His hatred of Romanism is genuine and intense. What Duessa was in the *Faery Queen* is Rome in Bacon's policy; it undermined the theory of government; it made all systems of policy futile. It has a fatal effect on the individual. "Superstition does the work of experience in crime; it impels and hardens men in wrong-doing;" it is "the reproach of the Deity." It were better even to be an atheist than a slave to superstition. It is better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of him. It is the foundation of all immorality both in the individual and in the state. But Bacon's ideas of morality and immorality are peculiar and puzzling, uninfluenced as they are by any high ideal of conduct or duty. Bacon in the world of

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science had vast and noble ideals: in practical life he had nothing that could be called an ideal. His treatment of men was regulated entirely with reference to what they were, not at all with reference to what they ought to be. Machiavelli was Bacon's guide in practical morality; he applied to individuals the morality that Machiavelli applied to states. What wonder then was it, if he had spent all his life in trying to understand the worst motives of human action, that Bacon at the close of his days could say "that age doth profit rather in the powers of the understanding than in the powers of the will and affections." For Bacon, like Machiavelli, based his action on knowledge of the worst side of man, ignoring that better side, that belief might have helped to develop. It is necessary, he says, for a private individual who is anxious to succeed to harden himself, and to learn to be good or otherwise according to the exigence of his affairs. "A tender man, one that desires to be honest in everything, runs a great hazard among so many of a contrary principle, and this great hazard no successful man would run." Bacon, like Machiavelli, would, if he had carried his principles to their extreme, have condemned the Christian religion as encouraging the self-denying principle, which places the highest good in self-repression and abnegation. Bacon, like Machiavelli, would have found himself a pagan, living for the development of the faculties, eager for happiness and success in this life. But Bacon wanted the sincerity of Machiavelli. The Christian faith was necessary to his political Church; he could not afford to deny it in theory, though his practical morals contradicted its belief. Indeed, he refused to see that his morality was unchristian; he refused to call the "art of advancement in life" an evil art, as Machiavelli did. He refused frankly to push his theories to their extreme; he had the inconsistency of a nature which can be explained as less frank than that of Machiavelli, but a nature which was larger and more sensitive, open to more sets of influences. He says, indeed, "There is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise"; that we must act from our belief in its foolishness, "not from our belief in its wisdom; we must love as if we were sometime to hate, and hate as if we were sometime to love;" but he could never quite crush those yearnings towards love and affection for human beings, which teach better than any creeds the principles of forbearance and unselfishness, without which the world is hollow, faces a gallery of pictures, and talk a tinkling cymbal. He could never have the cheerful complacency of the man who had only seen and felt one side; he had a slight

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touch of that bitterness that poisoned the life of the noble egotist who said there are so many millions in the world mostly fools, —a bitterness which came not so much from his contempt for humanity, as from his high idea of what man might be. But Bacon had no feeling for humanity which can be called love or enthusiasm; he had a certain pity for mankind which was as distant from love as it was from scorn. In the *De Augmentis* he treats of the reform and amendment of human nature. Custom and habit, he says, are powerful over men's natures, but the most effectual remedy is "that of electing and propounding into a man's self good and virtuous ends to his life and actions, such as may be in a reasonable sort within his compass to attain." And when we read the essay on Charity, "the affecting of the weal of men which is what the Grecians call Philanthropia," that inclination to goodness which is imprinted deeply in the nature of man, the highest form of it being to have St. Paul's perfection, to wish to "be an anathema from Christ, for the salvation of his brethren," we see that Bacon had in his heart an admiration and an understanding of those qualities which are at the root of the morality of social life. But only vaguely did he recognise the working of the spirit of self-sacrifice in actual life. He certainly did not realise that his ideal of a united Church was efficient and powerful mainly because it made this principle, that of mutual assistance and self-sacrifice, the bond of its union. Commonwealths and governments do nourish virtue grown, he said, but can not inspire it; he did not recognise that one of the greatest inspirations to virtue was "the loving consciousness of responsible ties." Neither had he that belief in government which characterises Machiavelli; he did not speak of one of the duties of government as being that of "constraining men to love one another."

In youth Bacon wrote, "I have as vast contemplative ends as I have moderate civil ends." We have seen the nature of the moderation of these civil ends: how he gained the whole world, but lost his own soul.

What can be said of his realisation of "those vast contemplative ends which were the cherished objects of his life?"

It is supposed that at college Bacon first conceived his profound contempt for the Aristotelian philosophy, but he always separated his condemnation of the disciples from his opinion of their master. Aristotle's vast intellect could not fail to extort admiration from one whose chief intellectual excellence was his power of grasp and wide comprehension. Indeed, no intellect

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could be less fitted than Bacon's for a lawyer's career, the one on which Bacon first entered, being called as a barrister in 1582. In the details of this narrow and technical profession his powers could not fail to be misunderstood. "Bacon hath great wit and much learning," said Elizabeth, "but in law he showeth to the uttermost of his knowledge and is not deep." Bacon's opinion of the legal mind can be gathered from his criticism on the Attorney-General. "He is one," he says, "who nibbleth solemnly at knowledge, and distinguisheth but doth not apprehend." He had always, all his life long, perhaps a too great contempt for those who made distinctions and had not the power of apprehension, the power of seizing "the similarities of things." He had, indeed, the defects of his great qualities; he had that deficiency in exactness of mind and in discrimination of details which belongs to intellects of the large comprehensive and poetic type, whose instinct is to see unity in everything and to neglect differences. He was led thus first to wonder at, then to despise, and then to subvert, the system of the schoolmen; and, perhaps, sometimes to underrate the genius of Aristotle, who combined with his width of intellect that subtlety of discrimination which was exaggerated by his followers and depreciated by Bacon. The mechanical part of Aristotle's system had been abused. "Aristotle's followers had despised that careful examination of nature, that wise and cautious prudence in the application to particular phenomena of general formulas, which had distinguished the work of their master. They thought themselves to be possessed of a mode of research which would give infallible correctness in the results obtained. They left entirely out of sight his prudent reserve, his great care, in the employment of his method. The synthetic mode of reasoning is peculiarly susceptible to the corruption that arises from over-subtlety in the vain employment of words, and various circumstances in the course of time contributed to its degeneration and to its consequent uselessness." It was used by the acute, disputatious Greek, "the fluent, subtle-sensed;" it was further corrupted by the Jews and the Arabs. Ultimately additional errors were given to it by the dogmas of mediæval Christianity, by that alliance between logic and Church doctrine in the schools, which limited the human mind on the one hand by the dogmas of the Church, and on the other by the so-called dogmas of Aristotle. It prevented free enquiry and examination of nature, and thus put a stop to progress; it encouraged that tendency to remain stationary, which the Aristotelian philosophy, even in its pure and normal state, had

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shown. Its ultimate aim had always been the attainment of abstract truth in order to purify and elevate the human faculties. The investigation of nature was merely a means to carry the mind towards the contemplation of the supreme Good and Beauty. Practical utility was never an aim. Thus the aim of ancient philosophy was entirely different to that of modern philosophy; consequently the methods of both were different. It was Bacon, whose mind was essentially utilitarian in the highest sense of the word, who first clearly exposed the uselessness of the ends aimed at by scholastic philosophy and substituted for its methods, methods which would enable the discovery of truth for the benefit and relief of man's estate. Many before him had attempted to throw off the yoke of scholasticism, but so intimately connected was it with with religious orthodoxy, that it was not possible to do so before the Reformation. Bacon, living in the England of Elizabeth and James I., at a time and in a country where a great revolution was possible, put the greatest and finishing touch to work in which Roger Bacon, Wyclif and his Lollards, and all who protested against authority, either in philosophy or religion, had been engaged. Bacon proposed to embody his system in a series of works called the "Instauratio Magna, or the Great Institution of True Philosophy." He must have known that the vast scheme of this great work could evidently not be accomplished by one man, for every new addition to knowledge would modify former conclusions; still the method which underlay the whole would remain. It was to consist first of the "Partitiones Scientiarum," a summary or classification of knowledge, with indications of those branches which had been imperfectly treated; secondly, of the "Novum Organum," or New Instrument, an exposition of the methods to be adopted in the investigation of truth, and indications of the principal sources of human error, and remedies against that error in future; thirdly, the "Phenomena Universi," a complete body of well-observed facts and experiments in all branches of human knowledge to furnish the raw material upon which the method was to be applied; fourthly, the "Scala Intellectus," rules for the gradual ascent of the mind from particular instances of phenomena to principles continually more and more abstract; fifthly, "Prodromi," or anticipations of forestallings of the New Philosophy, *i.e.* truths provisionally established to be afterwards tested by the New Method; sixthly, "Philosophia Secunda," the results of the first careful and complete application of the methods previously laid down to the vast body of facts to be accumulated and observed,

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in accordance with the rules and precautions contained in the second and fourth parts.

This was Bacon's scheme, and he was led to conceive it and to work for it through that enthusiasm which is the noblest trait in his character: his object was an endeavour to restore to its perfect and original condition "the commerce between the mind of man and the nature of things," a connection more precious to him than anything on earth. He was not a mere utilitarian in the narrow sense of the term: "Fruit for the life of man" was certainly the object of Bacon's philosophy, but it was more than to supply man's wants: it was to discover also the secret laws of nature. "Truth and utility are the very same things, and works themselves are of greater value as pledges of truth than as contributing to the comforts of life."

The first part of his scheme is known to us now as the *Advancement of Learning*, published 1605, afterwards altered and extended and republished in Latin in 1623 as *De Augmentis Scientiarum*. It opens with an address to the King, who was to be the chief co-operator in this great work, full of slavish and audacious flattery, characteristic of the age and of Bacon's own servile attitude towards the great. But much depended on the King's favour, on the help that he could give; "for I am well assured the excellence of the King deserves to be expressed not only in the praise of the present time and the fame of the future," but "in some solid work, fixed memorial and immortal monument, bearing a character or signature both of the power of a king and the difference and perfection of such a king." This solid work is to be the "Augmentation of Learning;" and for this end Bacon says he writes the present treatise in two parts, the first treating of the excellency of learning and knowledge, and therefore showing the excellency of merit in the propagation thereof; the second showing what has been done for learning, the defects of what has been done, "to the end that though I cannot positively or affirmatively advise your Majesty, or propound unto you framed particulars, yet I may excite your princely cogitations to visit the excellent treasure of your own mind, and thence to extract particulars for this purpose agreeable to your magnanimity and wisdom." And first he clears it from the disgraces it has received in the first instance from divines. The cause of the Fall was the proud knowledge of good and evil which man aspired to with the intent to give law unto himself and to depend no longer on God's law: it is not quantity of knowledge but quality of knowledge that is dangerous; and

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the fetters that must be kept on knowledge are just that we should not so place our felicity in knowledge till we forget our mortality, that we make application of our knowledge to give ourselves satisfaction and not distaste and repining, that we do not presume by contemplation of nature to attain to the mysteries of God, and, above all, that all our knowledge be referred to the good of man's estate. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." No bad result can come from knowledge save by accident; knowledge itself is pleasure, but when men fall to weakly and wrongly framing conclusions, then there will be evil results—sense discovers natural things, but it darkeneth the divine. We must use our sense to discover these natural things, to apprehend second causes; it is to reproach the Divinity to think that his works cannot bear investigation, and if a man press on far and see the dependence of causes he must "needs believe that the highest link of nature's chain is tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair." The objections of Politiques are as empty as those of divines, and in a passage which is an example of fulness of thought and conciseness of expression Bacon sums up their arguments. They say "learning doth soften men's minds and makes them more unapt for the honor and exercise of arms, that it doth mar and pervert men's dispositions for matter of government and policy in making them too curious and irresolute by variety of reading, or too peremptory or positive by strictness of rules and axioms, or too immoderate and overweening by reason of the greatness of examples, or too incompatible and differing from the times by reason of the dissimilitude of examples, or at least that it doth divert men's travails from action and business and bringeth them to a love of leisure and privateness, and that it doth bring into states a relaxation of discipline, whilst every man is more ready to argue than to obey and execute." But these objections have rather the countenance of gravity than grounds of justice. The authority of Cato and Socrates cannot countervail the force of those examples of concurrence in learning and arms which we hear of in Epaminondas the Theban, in Xenophon the Athenian. No government was ever disastrous that was in the hands of learned governors: Nero in his minority was kept straight by Seneca, a *pedanti;* Gordianus by Misitheus, a *pedanti:* the Popes, who are learned men, govern better than other rulers. And in everything "learning ministereth greater strength of medicine or remedy than it offereth cause of indisposition or infirmity." And

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he replies in a passage showing equal genius in full and concise expression to the objections of *politiques:* "For if by a secret operation it make men perplexed and irresolute, on the other side by plain precept it teacheth them what things are in their nature demonstrative and what are conjectural, and as well the use of distinctions and exceptions as the latitude of principles and rules. If it mislead by disproportion or dissimilitude of examples, it teacheth men the force of circumstances, the errors of comparisons, and all the cautions of application, so that in all these it doth rectify more effectually than it can pervert."

And, thirdly, the calumny that Learning suffers from learned men themselves either comes from circumstances which are not in them and not to their discredit, or is accidental. For instance, it is cast up against learned men that they are generally poor, but this ought to be to their credit: see what Machiavelli says of the Friars, "That the kingdom of the clergy had been long before at an end, if the reputation and reverence towards the poverty of the Friars had not borne out the scandal of the superfluities and excesses of bishops and prelates." And by no means are their employments mean: to them is confided the government of youth, and Bacon, in his anxiety to dignify this profession, uses an argument characteristically far-fetched. It is said, "your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions;" this, according to Bacon, plainly indicating that in proportion as visions are superior to dreams, so is youth superior to age. Their manners, perhaps, are hardly likely to render them successful in practical life, but are by no means to their discredit. Indeed their custom of much reading in books, and reading perhaps of better times than their own, makes them too ideal in their views: makes them hard on their own times: "and learning enduing them with a true sense of the frailty of their persons, of the casualty of their fortunes, of the dignity of their soul and vocation, makes them careless of their behaviour in the world and to the people of the world; and because the largeness of their minds can hardly confine itself to dwell on the examination of the nature and customs of an individual, they fail in applying themselves to one particular person."

But more important, more detrimental to learning than the objections of divines and *politiques*, than the poverty, the manners and habits of learned men, are the errors and vanities that have intervened in the studies of the learned; and first the study of words not matter which came in with the Renaissance. Bacon's view of the Renaissance is peculiar, yet interesting, as

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being the narrow view of a contemporary concerning that greatest of all movements of the civilised world. "Martin Luther, conducted (no doubt) by an higher providence, but in discourse of reason finding what a province he had undertaken against the Bishop of Rome and the degenerate traditions of the Church, and finding his own solitude, being no ways aided by the opinions of his own time, was enforced to awake all antiquity, and to call former times to his succours to make a party against the present time: so that the ancient authors, both in divinity and in humanity, which had long time slept in libraries, began generally to be read and revolved. And thereof grew again a delight in their manner of style and phrase, and an admiration of that kind of writing: which was much furthered and precipitated by the enmity and opposition that the propounders of those primitive but seeming new opinions had against the schoolmen: who were generally of the contrary part, and whose writings were altogether in a differing style and form; taking liberty to coin and frame new terms of art to express their own sense, and to avoid circuit of speech, without regard to the pureness, pleasantness, and lawfulness (as I may call it) of the phrase and word." They cared merely for the form: they were not like Pygmalion, unsatisfied till spirit was breathed into the pure form. And this, says Bacon, is the dangerous tendency of humanistic learning: it is a hindrance to severe study, it offers things which are too easy a satisfaction to the mind of man. And, again, there is another real danger to learning, and that is futile learning: and learning can be futile either in subject or method. Learning that was useless in subject "did chiefly reign among the schoolmen: who having sharp and strong wits and abundance of leisure and small variety of reading, but their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle, their dictator), as their persons were shut up in the cells of the monasteries and colleges, and knowing little history, either of nature or time, did out of no great quantity of matter and infinite agitation of wit spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books . . . cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit." And the schoolmen's method profited them nothing; for they propose to themselves problems, and then give, not solutions, not confutations or confirmations, but distinctions. The strength of a science is in the relation of all its parts, as strength was with the bundle of faggots when all were tied together, and weakness when they were separated; but schoolmen made science weak and futile, because by

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their method, instead of suppressing the smaller sort of objections, they drew them forward and concentrated their attention upon them.

Of all defects of knowledge, deceit and untruth in the subject-matter is the foulest, destroying the essential form of knowledge. A tendency to deteriorate knowledge is to believe things on too easy a warrant—ecclesiastical history has much suffered in this respect; or secondly, to attribute too much belief to the arts themselves or to the authors of arts, as, for instance, in astrology and alchemy. Education has sometimes the effect of rendering the mind servile and credulous; but pupils should only temporarily suspend their judgment. When they have received instruction they must revert again to their independent judgment. Other imperfections which distort knowledge are, too great belief in antiquity, and distrust that anything further can be found out by present or future times; and thus knowledge and science tend to become stationary and rigid. Another obstacle to progress is found in the fact that we have abandoned Philosophia Prima. Philosophia Prima is the highest of all sciences, containing as its facts axioms which are proper to all sciences. Without it no progress can be made; for no discovery can be made upon a flat or level. Also men have too great adoration for the powers of their own minds: they are too much "given to tumbling up and down in their own conceits:" they are impatient of doubt: will not duly suspend their judgment. When they deliver knowledge it is done in too magisterial and peremptory a way, it is not ingenuous or faithful. But the greatest error is the misplacement of the end of knowledge. "For men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight; sometimes for ornament and reputation; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction; and most times for lucre and profession; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason, to the benefit and use of men: as if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and restless spirit; or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect; or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon; or a fort or commanding ground for strife and contention; or a shop for profit and sale; and not a rich store-house for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate." Lastly, when learning has been cleared from all false calumny, and the abuses to which it is liable exposed and explained, what shall be said of its dignity? Its

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origin is enough to prove its dignity. All learning is knowledge acquired, and all knowledge in God is original; in heaven the angels of knowledge and illumination are placed before the angels of office and domination. Abel, the shepherd of contemplative life, was preferred by God to Cain. Moses "was seen in all the knowledge of the Egyptians." Job was swelling with knowledge. Solomon says, "The glory of God is to conceal a thing, but the glory of man is to find it out." Our Saviour conferred frequently with priests and doctors; and by the efforts of that most learned sect, the Jesuits, much has been done to repair the dignity and authority of the Roman See. And there are not wanting human proofs of its dignity. All who were inventors of new arts and endowments, etc., were consecrated by the ancients among the gods themselves; under learned governors nations have always held the most dignified position; see the times of Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius;—and here opportunity is given for an elaborate panegyric on Elizabeth. And it nourishes not only imperial and military virtue, but private and moral virtue; it is the promoter of that type of mind which tends to progress. "It disposeth the mind not to be fixed in defects, but capable of growth." . . . "It taketh away all levity, temerity, and insolency by copious suggestions of all doubts and difficulties, and acquainting the mind to balance reasons on both sides, and to turn back the first offers and conceits of the mind, and to accept of nothing but examined and tried. It taketh away vain admiration of anything which is the root of all weakness." But, says Bacon, in concluding this first book,—most characteristic of him in its thought, in its profound reverence and deep enthusiasm for knowledge, in its contempt for learning which has no useful end in view, in its concise style, heavy with thought, bearing traces of classic influence, in the long quotations from classic authors, in the long sentences, in the long sustained arguments, the "contentious writing,"—"I do not pretend, and I know it will be impossible for me, by any pleading of mine, to reverse the judgment either of Esop's cock, that preferred the barley corn before the gem, or of Midas that judged for plenty, or Paris for beauty and love against wisdom and power. There are those that prefer custom and habit before all excellency. These things must continue as they have been; but so will that also continue whereupon learning hath ever relied, and which faileth not. Justificata est sapientia a filiis suis."

In the second part of his introduction to his great work he shows what, so far, has been done for the Advancement of Learning and the defects of the same, giving a classification of all

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branches of human knowledge under the two great divisions —Human Learning and Divine Learning: human learning embracing three great classes—History, Poetry, and Philosophy: poetry, referring only to the imagination, has a small place assigned to it in importance and space. In its cultivation, Bacon, living in the prime of Elizabethan literature, can find no deficience, "for being as a plant that cometh of the lust of the earth, without a formal seed, it hath sprung up and spread abroad more than any other kind." We are indebted to it "for the expressing of affections, passions, corruptions, and customs. But," he concludes, with a decision which he thinks it needless to explain, "it is not good to stay too long in the theatre."

Of the great work which he proposed to himself he executed very little. He wrote only the first part of the *Novum Organum*, and in the third division his most complete work was the *Silva Silvarum*, or Natural History in Ten Centuries. In the *Novum Organum* he lays down the principles of his reform in method. "Certainly they are quite new: and yet they are copied from a very ancient model, even the world itself and the nature of things." They are to supersede reasoning by synthesis: the mind must not descend downwards from theory to fact, but must carefully observe phenomena before ascending to general rules or principles. Bacon shows that the rigidity of scholastic science comes partly from the fact that the ancients, instead of following for themselves the method which Aristotle had employed—viz. the inductive method, the observation of facts—had misused their energy in quibbling about terms and in formulating the rules of the syllogism: that they had not attacked the real difficulties which prevented discovery of truth. These lay in combating the prejudices and infirmities of human nature that obscure the clear and impartial observation of fact. These are the prejudices common to the whole human race, prejudices of nation and race, those of the age, of religion, of profession, those which come from the use of terms either not understood or not agreed upon; the difficulties raised by false philosophy, all the idols of the human race, which he respectively calls those of the Tribe, the Cave or Den, the Market-place, and the Theatre. He would not seriously reject the syllogism, but he saw that in natural science it was of no use till its terms were defined, and human ingenuity had wasted itself in the attempt at definition, because it considered itself justified in disregarding facts altogether, and dwelling among barren subtleties which were of no use, except as gymnastics for the intellect. The observation of

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fact, not the fitting of fact into theory, was the one thing on which Bacon insisted, and he founds his system on the ordinary course of reasoning followed by every human being. "But to the immediate and proper perception of the senses he does not attach much weight:" therefore he proceeds to supply helps for the senses. The art of conducting experiments is thus the principal part of Bacon's method; and when by experiments he has discovered the nature of a fact and its cause, he then proceeds to consider the ultimate cause of that cause. For instance, if he wished to investigate the nature of heat, he must ascertain not only the causes of heat in any one body, but the ultimate cause, form, or law that produces heat in all bodies. This is the science of metaphysics (in Bacon's sense of the term), above the science of physics, which only inquires into efficient causes. Physics could tell us the cause of heat, that it is a mode of motion; but metaphysics is the science that deals with final causes, showing us the nature of motion in itself, how it produces different phenomena, such as heat, light, generation, corruption, etc. And last comes Prima Philosophia, the parent and stem of all sciences, containing not merely "similitudes, as men of narrow observation may conceive them to be, but the same footsteps of nature, treading or printing upon several subjects or matters." But the axioms of Prima Philosophia are often no more than mere analogies, suggestive and characteristic of Bacon's poetic mind, which was for ever seeing the similarities of things, but so wide, so vague, so general, that they are of no scientific importance; as, for instance, the axiom that the nature of everything is best seen in its smallest portions is common to physics and politics. If equals are added to unequals the wholes will be unequal, an axiom of mathematics and also of justice. That a discord ending immediately in a concord sets off harmony is true both in ethics and in music. Many of them are but pathetic instances of Bacon's frantic attempt to realise the unity of nature. He fell into that danger which he himself recognised, "that tendency of the human understanding which, of its own nature, is prone to suppose the existence of more order and regularity in the world than it finds." His conception of the Prima Philosophia but showed his intense yearning to know those great laws for the discovery of which his method paved the way; he would have wished to be a discoverer like Newton, who, "by connecting the motions of the planets with the fall of the apple, bound heaven and earth together in the unity of one simple law of attraction." What he actually accomplished beyond the great

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stimulus he gave seems small when put into words: "he traced and formulated the steps of the rightly working mind." Lord Macaulay, with his illustration of the man and the mince-pies, tries to show that Bacon's work has been much overrated, that he simply systematised a process which every ordinary mind goes through in order to arrive at any conclusion. This Bacon would not deny: but he distrusted the conclusions of an ordinary mind left to work by itself: he felt that to genius only was it given to follow out the ordinary course of reasoning in great matters with adequate closeness and accuracy, "only a few by native and genuine force of the mind are able to fall into my form of interpretation." For those who could not claim genius he gave a substitute in his "Art of experiments." "Our method of discovering knowledge is of such a kind that it leaves very little to keenness and strength of intellect, but almost levels all intellects and abilities." It made scientific progress possible, without genius: "the rules of harmony are perhaps useless to Mozarts and Beethovens, but a statement of such rules is not only useful to music as a whole, but it opens possibilities of utility to those to whom harmony is not an instinct."

Lord Macaulay, as he underrates the importance of Bacon's scientific work, so he overrates the exactness and the learning of Bacon. Bacon when he wrote the *De Augmentis* did not know the discoveries that had been made through Kepler's calculations: he probably did not know—he certainly took no notice of, Napier's logarithms, of Archimedes' work in geometry, of Galileo's theory of the acceleration of falling bodies. Blinded by prejudice to the use and merits of deductive theory, he could not realise that a mathematician could dispense with induction. He despised what had been done in astronomy: he wished to set on foot a history of celestial bodies collected from purely inductive observation, without any infusion of dogma. Still the mote in Bacon's eye was very small compared to the beam that he wished to extract from the eye of his generation: that youthful anticipation of his great work, which he published in 1585, "which with great confidence and a magnificent title I named the greatest 'book of time,'" did not by its grand title overrate the subsequent achievement of its author, though it was rather different from what Bacon imagined it would be: his work was as useful from a destructive point of view, as it was stimulating from a constructive. If Bacon did not do much himself, he showed what could be done.

Bacon's scientific work was not appreciated by the age.

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James I. said of the *Novum Organum*, that it was like the peace of God which passeth understanding. The idea of a college whose aim should be the advancement of science as a whole, containing departments at which worked a specialist in each branch, their work being conducted with reference to the advance of the whole, was never realised; and yet Bacon, not understanding that a great revolution could not be wrought, nor a new order of things established, in one man's lifetime, devoted everything in order to bring about the practical realisation of his theory. "Qu'est-ce que c'est qu' une grande vie?" asks Comte. "La pensée de la jeunesse accomplie dans l'âge mûr." In this sense Bacon's life was not great. Very sad is the passage in his diary which he wrote at the end of his life. "Besides my innumerable sins, I confess before thee that I am debtor to thee for the gracious talent of thy gifts and graces, which I have neither put into a napkin, nor put it, as I ought, to exchangers, where it might have made best profit, but misspent it in things for which I was least fit: so as I may truly say, my soul hath been a stranger in the course of my pilgrimage." "Death," says Bacon, "openeth the door to good fame," but a thinking posterity, though recognising that Bacon has a great and unique nature which must not be judged by ordinary standards, though recognising that the stimulus he gave to science by seeking it, "not arrogantly within the little cells of human wit, but humbly in the greater world," by his method in observation, by his love of truth, and by his sense of law, was great and unparalleled, must necessarily regard his practical life as the history of the gradual moral degradation of a human soul, which became in the end incapable of great and noble impulse, incapable, too, of that lasting remorse which can be a power over conduct. As Sir Thomas More made a noble failure in practical life because his ideals were too high, and because he possessed no knowledge of the art of advancement in life, so Bacon made a miserable failure, because he had no ideals, no belief in humanity, and guided his action by an art of life which was grounded solely on his knowledge of the worst side of human nature.

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CHAPTER XV.

DECLINE OF ELIZABETHAN POETRY.

DONNE, John, 1573-1631; BROWNE, William, 1588-1643; WITHER, George, 1588-1667; FLETCHER, Giles, 1588-1623; CAREW, Thomas, 1589-1639; HERRICK, Robert, 1594-1674; HABINGTON, William, 1605-1654; SUCKLING, Sir John, 1608-1642; LOVELACE, Richard, 1618-1658; HERBERT, George, 1592-1634; CRASHAW, Richard, 1615-1650; VAUGHAN, Henry, 1621-1695.

THE Poetry of the Elizabethan period suffered in the same way as Dramatic Art from the circumstances of national life—from the divorce between the serious and artistic interests of society. It became fantastic, obscure, dealing with far-fetched thoughts, out-of-the-way conceits. The brains of the poets of these later times, like those of the schoolmen of mediæval times, became locked up in the cells of their own imaginations, and these imaginations were fed by no robust, wide, or healthy interests. Prose, on the contrary, increased in dignity of style and weight of thought: the serious thoughts and ideas that agitated men on the brink of the great Puritan struggle, their enthusiasm for freedom and religious independence, found in prose the vehicle for their expression. The prose of this time was not truly artistic; it was not polished, self-controlled, and restrained, as it was when the eighteenth century had inflicted its severe discipline on the English mind; but it was eloquent, full of the enthusiasm of deep feeling, and lighted up occasionally by flashes of that true poetic vision which was the inheritance even of the degenerate Elizabethan. Its faults were those of over-elaboration, reminding one of too much straining after "the witty quaintness" of Lyly and Sidney: sometimes it was cumbered with images and metaphors, sometimes clumsy and strained with excess of matter. But it rarely displayed the fatal faults of emptiness or artificiality. These qualities, together with the advantages that sometimes go

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with them, grace and charm and refinement, were the characteristics of a declining school of poetic art.

Dr. Johnson has given to that school, which embraces the poets of the decline, the name of Metaphysical, because, as Hallam says, "they labored after conceits or novel turns of thought, usually false, and resting on some equivocation of language or exceedingly remote analogy." They are poets who for delicacy of genius and facility and grace of expression have few equals in any period of our literature. But with the exception of their rural poetry, all their work is marked by the slenderer genius that pursues ingenuities and refinements of thought. Contrast the simplicity and directness of a sonnet of Sylvester's with one addressed by Browne to his mistress—

"Were I as base as is the lowly plain,
And you, my love, as high as heaven above,
Yet should the thoughts of me, your humble swain,
Ascend to heaven in honor of my love.
Were I as high as heaven above the plain,
And you, my love, as humble and as low
As are the deepest bottoms of the main,
Wheresoe'er you were, with you my love should go.
Were you the earth, dear love, and I the skies,
My love should shine on you like to the sun,
And look upon you with ten thousand eyes,
Till heaven waxed blind, and till the world were done.
Wheresoe'er I am, below, or else above you,
Wheresoe'er you are, my heart shall truly love you."

In the following sonnet, the feeling, though it may be as sincere as Sylvester's bids fair to become entangled and lose itself in subtlety—

"Fairest, when by the rules of palmistry
You took my hand to try if you could guess
By lines therein, if any wight there be
Ordained to make me know some happiness,
I wished that those characters could explain
Whom I will never wrong with hope to win,
Or that by them a copy might be seen
By you, O love, what thoughts I had within.
But since the hand of nature did not set
(As providently loth to have it known)
The means to find that hidden alphabet,
Mine eyes shall be the interpreters alone.
By them conceive my thoughts, and tell me, fair,
If now you see her that doth love me there."

DONNE was the most obscure and fanciful of the metaphysical poets. Mr. Hales says, "His chief interest is that he was the

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principal founder of a school which especially expressed and represented a certain bad taste of his day. Of his genius there can be no question, but it was perversely directed." In Donne, too, we find hints of that weariness and depression of life which was another characteristic of the decline of true art, a reaction against the intense energy and vital exuberance of the earlier time. It mixes with the spirit of his love-songs—

"Sweetest love, I do not go,
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter love for me;
But since that I
Must die at last, 'tis best
Thus to use myself in jest,
By feigned deaths to die.

"Yesternight the sun went hence
And yet is here to-day,
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way;
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Hastier journeys since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

"O how feeble is man's power,
That if good fortune fall,
Cannot ado another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall!
But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length,
Itself o'er us t' advance."

Some of the best and most powerful of the love-songs are those of Herrick. HERRICK was the most vigorous and most versatile poet of his school. Among pastoral writers he was one of the most famous as a lyrist; he is scarcely excelled except by Shelley. Some of his lyrics have the force and the passion which belongs to earlier days, as, for instance, the song to Anthea—

"Bid me to live and I will live
Thy Protestant to be;
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

"A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee.

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"Bid that heart stay, and it will stay
To honor thy decree;
Or bid it languish quite away,
And 't shall do so for thee.

"Bid me to weep, and I will weep
While I have eyes to see;
And having none, yet I will keep
A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair
Under that cypress tree;
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en death to die for thee.

"Thou art my life, my love, my heart
The very eyes of me;
And hast command of every part,
To live and die for thee."

The love-poems of RICHARD LOVELACE have a certain nobility of feeling which distinguishes them from the generality of those of this school, which are written in a rather morbid self-centered spirit. The song "to Althea," from prison, ending—

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage.
If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty;"—

the song to his love, "On going to the Wars"—

"Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To wars and arms I fly.

"True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field,
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

"Yet this inconstancy is such
As you, too, shall adore;
I could not love thee, dear, so much
Loved I not honour more,"—

both express a freer healthier spirit than is usual with the fantastic school. There are also love-poems written in a spirit

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of reaction. To SUCKLING the lover presents himself in a light not altogether solemn and pathetic. He is impatient with him—

"Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?

"Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do it?
Prithee, why so mute?"

Suckling is also flippant. He is impatient with the constancy of love—

"Out upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together,
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

"Had it any been but she,
And that very face,
There had been at least ere this,
A dozen dozen in her place."

Surely such a flippant and impatient treatment of a state of mind, whose least symptoms had been honoured and dignified by the conventions and traditions of ages, announced the coming of revolutionary times.

The best poem inspired by the reactionary spirit is that of GEORGE WITHER, "the Author's Resolution," in a sonnet—

"Shall I wasting in despair
Die, because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day
Or the flowery meads in May,
If she think not well of me,
What care I how fair she be?

"Shall my silly heart be pin'd
Cause I see a woman kind,
Or a well-disposed nature
Joined with a lovely feature.
Be she meeker, kinder than
Turtle-dove or pelican,
If she be not so to me,
What care I how kind she be.

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"Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her well deservings known
Make me quite forget mine own?
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may merit name of best;
If she be not such to me,
What care I how good she be.

"Cause her fortune seems too high,
Shall I play the fool and die?
She that bears a noble mind,
If not outward helps she find,
Thinks what with them he would do
That without them dares her woo,
And unless that mind I see,
What care I how great she be.

"Great or good or kind or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair;
If she love me (this believe),
I will die ere she shall grieve.
If she slight me when I woo
I can scorn and let her go,
For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be."

Herrick's pastorals mark an important epoch in the history of pastoral poetry. The pastoral existed in its original simplicity as the poetry of rural life among the Sicilians; but, following the great authority of Virgil, Petrarch and Sannazaro in Italy, Guarini in Spain, Spenser, Beaumont, and Fletcher in England, had all sought in it merely an artificial sphere in which their art could disport itself. They were not animated by that strong feeling for nature, that worship for her, as the inspiration of what is purest, most natural and most ideal in life, which alone justifies any artist in treating the pastoral, and which makes Wordsworth the greatest pastoral poet we possess. Spenser, in his *Shepherd's Calendar*, had used the pastoral as a vehicle for satire against the corruption of the times. He had thus followed the example of Baptista Mantuanus and his English imitator Alexander Barclay, who first used it as a means for moral satire. Gradually the old spirit which had at first animated it became quite dead. Ben Jonson in England first endeavoured to put into it some vigorous element by connecting it with national legend, but it was these poets of the metaphysical school, Herrick, Browne, and Wither, who first infused it with that spirit which alone can make it a branch of art: they

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were the first in England to understand what the proper sphere of the pastoral is.

And it was not unnatural that at this time of decline the pastoral should make a new step forward. For the very fundamental cause of the decline of art was the separation of art and national life. Art was driven back to feed upon itself: it became either fantastic and subtly ingenious, or it became degraded by dealing with the facts of an unhealthy and degenerate court life, as in the drama, or it sought this sphere in which it still might be fresh and real. Its banishment from actual practical life gave it opportunities for an uninterrupted worship of nature, the opportunity for drinking in and acting on its inspiration, untroubled by the interests of a complex human life. The poetry of Herrick was the first anticipation of the spirit that animates Wordsworth's poems. He and his contemporaries, Wither and Browne, were the first in a series of poets,—including later, after the chilling influence of the eighteenth century had passed away, Thomson, Gray, Collins, and Coleridge,—all of whom understand, more or less, the real spirit of nature, after which the unfortunate pastoral had for so long unsuccessfully groped. Twenty years of Arcadian seclusion in Devonshire prepared Herrick for the writing of his *Hesperides*. "There is not a sunnier book in the world than the *Hesperides*," says Mr. Gosse: "to open it is to enter a rich garden on a summer afternoon, and to smell the perfume of a wealth of flowers and warm herbs and ripening fruits. The poet sings in short flights of songs of all that makes life gay and luxurious, of the freshness of a dewy field, of the fecundity and heat of harvest, of the odour and quietude of an autumn orchard." "I sing," says Herrick, in "the Argument of the *Hesperides*,"

> "Of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
> Of April, May, of June and July-flowers;
> I sing of may-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
> Of bride-grooms, brides, and of their bridal-cakes;
> I write of youth, of love, and have access
> By these to sing of cleanly wantonness;
> I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece,
> Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris;
> I sing of times trans-shifting, and I write
> How roses first came red and lilies white;
> I write of groves, of Twilights, and I sing
> The court of Mab and of the Fairy king;
> I write of Hell; I sing, and ever shall,
> Of Heaven—and hope to have it after all."

His song to the Daffodils is one of the most charming that

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he has written. There is, however, a slight touch of pathos in it which does not allow it to be taken as characteristic of his rural poetry, which is perfectly fresh and free from repining—

"Fair Daffodils we weep to see
You haste away so soon,
As yet the early rising sun
Hath not attained his noon;
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

"We have short time to stay as you;
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again."

Browne and Wither also understood the true spirit of the pastoral. Wither had "a beautiful soul" and an artistic temperament, but he early threw himself into a life of politics, and, as Mr. W. J. Arnold says, "his nature was not large enough to pour itself with equal power into the two channels of art and practical life." Later, like all the deeper and more thinking spirits of the time, he became a strict Puritan: that delight in nature, that enthusiasm for life and its interests and beauties, which had inspired his poems seemed to him to be wrong, to be dangerous trifling with the seriousness of existence.

The *Britannia's Pastorals* of BROWNE were honoured with some charming commendatory verses by Drayton. "He is less unreal," says Mr. Arnold, "than almost any other English poet who chose the pastoral as his sphere, though sometimes his attempts to keep up the conventional pastoral illusion are of a desperate character, as, for instance, where he addresses his readers as 'swains.'" He had a true enthusiasm for his native country, for his native streams, for

"Tavy's voiceful stream, to whom I owe
More strains than from my pipe can ever flow."

He never, like Wither, regretted a youth which he had spent amidst outdoor sights and influences—

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"Nor could I wish those golden hours unspent
Wherein my fancy led me to the woods
And tuned soft lays of rural merriment
Of shepherd's love and never-resting floods."

He has a genuine delight in country sights and sounds which makes his poetry exceedingly pleasing, though he did not quite succeed in overcoming the difficulties of the pastoral. The passages which please most in his poetry are the description of simple rural sights—

"a nimble squirrel from the wood,
Ranging the hedges for his filbert-food,
Sits pertly on a bough his brown nuts cracking;"

the song of Celadyne when his love is gone—

"So shuts the marigold her leaves
At the departure of the sun;
So from the honey-suckle sheaves
The bee goes when the day is done;
So sits the turtle when she is but one,
And so all woe, as I, since she is gone."

"Henceforth," says Mr. Stopford Brooke, "we find a country-poetry set over against a town-poetry, a poetry of nature set over against a poetry of man." The finest work of this kind was yet to be done by Milton, and his secretary, Andrew Marvell, men who represent no age or school, standing between the declining Elizabethan age and that age of reaction which ultimately produced the finished artists of the eighteenth century.

Browne had the most profound admiration for Spenser—

"Divinest Spenser, heaven-bred, happy muse!
Would any power into my brain infuse
Thy worth, or all that poets had before,
I could not praise till thou deservest no more."

And this admiration connects him with a section of the metaphysical school who are known as the Spenserians.

Phineas Fletcher, Giles Fletcher, Henry More, John Chalkhill, all spoke of Spenser as their master. In this period the merits of Chaucer were quite eclipsed by those of Spenser. Naturally to all temperaments of a Puritan and serious turn Spenser would be most congenial, and this school in all it wrote showed a serious and didactic spirit, a desire to deal with the more serious interests of life. The *Purple Island* by

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Phineas Fletcher is simply a lecture on anatomy, the artist becoming almost lost in the moralist. His brother, GILES FLETCHER, is best known by his religious poems. He writes with enthusiasm of "Christ's Victory in Heaven," "Christ's Victory on Earth." Like all poets of this school he uses his imagination not to create but to decorate. He specially succeeded in close imitation of his master.

"Before this cursed throng goes Ignorance,
That needs will lead the way he cannot see,
And after all Death doth his flag advance,
And in the midst strife still would roguing be,
Whose ragged flesh and clothes did well agree:
And round about amazed horror flies,
And over all shame veils his guilty eyes,
And underneath Hell's hungry throat still yawning lies."

Some of the most beautiful of the poetry of this declining age is found in the religious writings. Herbert, Herrick, Vaughan, Habington, Crashaw, Wither, were all animated by that religious fervour which is distinct from the Puritan because it deals not so much with the definite creeds that stimulate right action as with those mystic spiritual longings which seek to leave earth and to find in emotional life a heaven for the soul. There is about these religious poets a sort of wildness, a restless excitement, a blind craving for satisfaction, a revolt against that faith of despair which Webster puts into the mouth of Bosola in the *Duchess of Malfi*. "Didst thou ever see a lark in a cage? Such is the soul in the body: the world is like her little turf of grass: and the heaven o'er our heads, like her looking-glass, only gives us as miserable knowledge of the small compass of our prison." This restlessness, this craving of the soul, gives a sort of pathos to their tone. Religion is great because it alone can give rest and satisfaction.

"Leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit and not: forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands
Which petty thoughts have made; and make to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw
And be thy law
While thou didst wink and would'st not see.
Away! take heed;
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's-head there, tie up thy fears;
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load;

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But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling 'Child,'
And I replied 'My Lord.'"

The restlessness of personal aspiration is still more visible in the *Litany* of Herrick :—

"In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet spirit, comfort me.

"When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet spirit, comfort me.

. . . . .

When, God knows, I'm tost about
Either with despair or doubt ;
Yet before the glass be out,
Sweet spirit, comfort me."

In the poems of Vaughan, Habington, and Crashaw there are, indeed, traces of the same fervent heart-searching spirit ; but HABINGTON, who was a fervent and orthodox Catholic, wrote poems filled with the calm of a deep and poetic mysticism.

"When I survey the bright
Celestial sphere,
So rich with jewels hung, that night
Doth like an Ethiop bride appear,

"My soul her wings doth spread
And heaven-ward flies,
The Almighty's mysteries to read
In the large volumes of the skies.

"For the bright firmament
Shoots forth no flame
So silent, but is eloquent
In speaking the Creator's name."

Equally beautiful are some of the poems of VAUGHAN, also calmer and quieter expressions of a soul longing for the spiritual life.

"They are all gone into the world of light,
And I alone sit lingering here ;
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

. . . . . .

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"I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days;
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmerings and decays.

. . . . . .

"Dear beauteous death! the jewel of the just,
Shining nowhere, but in the dark;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark.

. . . . . .

"And yet as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul, when man doth sleep:
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
And into glory peep."—*Beyond the Veil.*

A little poem on *The World* is written in the same tone—

"I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years,
Driven by the spheres,
Like a vast shadow mov'd."

And CRASHAW, in his lines to St. Theresa, expresses with equal beauty and feeling, but with greater excitement, the intensity and purity of religious longings—

"O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire;
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seiz'd thy parting soul, and seal'd thee his;
By all the Heaven thou hast in him
(Fair sister of the seraphim!)
By all of him we have in thee;
Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die."—*The Flaming Heart.*

We find, indeed, among the writings of the metaphysical school gleams of the purest poetry, flashes of the old Elizabethan spirit, invigorating with its freshness the rural poetry of Herrick and of Browne, giving glow and passion to their mystic religious yearnings. But its spirit was not fundamentally healthy: it

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was undoubtedly the poetry of decadence. It was animated not by that real originality whose only true nourishment is that deep interest in life which is continually seeing new aspects of it, and making to itself new imaginative illusions, but by the desire to run in subtle and obscure currents of thought, to strike as novel and fresh, by saying the thing which is least obvious and least expected. There was no health, either moral or artistic, in a school one of whose chief ornaments, Crashaw, could find delight in that conceit which describes the miracle of Cana of Galilee—

"The modest water saw its God and blushed."

The conceits, the imagery, the metaphors which became in time the soul and substance of poetry were but the ornaments of a prose which was the expression of the serious and solemn sides of life. Thus it is that the prose of this time flourished. It had a certain artistic life peculiar to itself; it was not the pure polished prose of the times after the Renaissance, but it was earnest, eloquent, impassioned prose. It had, indeed, very often the defects of its qualities: it was heavy, involved, and cumbrous; its writers lacked the dignified and stately eloquence of Hooker, or the epigrammatic terseness of Bacon, but on the whole they write pleasingly and artistically, always conscious of a meaning which they never allowed an elaborate style altogether to crush.

"The interest in individual life, which," as Mr. Stopford Brooke says, "now began to arise, and which soon took the form of biography," found expression in the works of Sir J. Overbury, of John Earle, and Joseph Hall. Thomas Fuller gave a further stimulus to the literature of biography in his *Worthies of England*. The historical literature of the period, begun by More, continued by the dull but respected Stow and Holinshed, contributed to by Raleigh and Bacon, was carried on by Fuller in his *Church History of Britain*. Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* and his *Pseudodoxia* deal with miscellaneous subjects of interest in a diffuse, quaint, and fantastic style. But the book most characteristic of the times is *The Anatomy of Melancholy* by Burton. Analysis of emotion is characteristic of a declining age, and that the emotion so analysed should be that of melancholy is but a further proof of that reaction which had set in against the exuberant and enjoying age of Elizabeth. The passion and strong emotion of that age had ever been of near kinship to madness. What wonder then that many of the

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succeeding generation should suffer both physically and mentally from the overstrain of excitement. The author himself was subject to melancholy, and gives this as the reason for writing his large and learned treatise, which deals with the causes, the cures, and the symptoms. He finds abundant satisfaction for his scholarly tastes in quotations and allusions to the works of those numerous authors to whose study he had devoted himself. Passionless, pedantic, and cold as his treatment of the whole subject is, his style yet recalls that great age, which, overflowing with thought and feeling, delighted in dilatation, in piling up the words, and lengthening out the clauses to intensify the thought. "Melancholy," he says, "the subject of our present discourse, is either in disposition or habit. In disposition is that transitory melancholy which goes and comes upon every small occasion of sorrow, need, sickness, trouble, fear, grief, passion, or perturbation of the mind, any manner of care, discontent, or thought which causeth anguish, dulness, heaviness, and vexation of spirit, any ways opposite to pleasure, mirth, joy, delight, causing frowardness in us, or of dislike. In which equivocal and improper sense we call him melancholy that is sad, dull, sour, lumpish, ill-disposed, solitary, any way moved, or displeased. And from these melancholy dispositions no man living is free, no stoic, none so wise, none so happy, none so patient, so generous, so godly, so divine, that can vindicate himself; so well composed, but more or less, some time or other more or less he feels the smart of it. Melancholy in this sense is the character of mortality. 'Man that is born of woman is of short continuance and full of trouble.' Zeno, Cato, Socrates himself, whom Elian so highly commends for a moderate temper, that 'nothing could disturb him,' but going out and coming in, still Socrates kept the same serenity of countenance, what misery soever befel him (if we may believe Plato, his disciple), was much tormented with it. . . . Even in the midst of laughing there is sorrow (as Solomon holds). . . . And it is most absurd and ridiculous for any mortal man to look for a perpetual tenure of happiness in this life."

Very similar, energetic, diffuse, overcrowded with words, is the vindictive style of Milton. Milton thus alludes to his enemies: "They shall be thrown eternally into the darkest and deepest gulf of hell, where, under the despiteful control, the trample and spurn of all the other damned, that in the anguish of their torture shall have no other ease than to exercise a raving and bestial tyranny over them as their slaves and negroes, they

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shall remain in that plight, for ever the basest, the lowermost, the most dejected, most underfoot, and down-trodded vassals of superstition."

The prose of Jeremy Taylor belongs to the same age, but it is refined and softened by that interest in life and men which is sympathetic, not merely analytic as in the case of Burton, or fired by intolerance as in the case of Milton. It is thus that Jeremy Taylor warns his congregation against the gradual advance of sin. "I have seen the little pearls of a spring sweat through the bottom of a bank, and intenerate the stubborn pavement till it hath made it fit for the impression of a child's foot; and it was despised, like the descending pearls of a misty morning, till it had opened its way and made a stream large enough to carry away the ruins of the undermined strand and to invade the neighbouring gardens; but then the despised drops were grown into an artificial river and an intolerable mischief. So are the entrances of sin." And he encourages them to aspire and to hope. "For so I have seen a lark rising from his bed of grass and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of its wings, till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over, and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing as if it had learned music and motion from an angel as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below."

Jeremy Taylor, born 1613, dying 1667, lived and wrote long after the Elizabethan period may be said to have closed; but the sweet quaintness of his style, his longing for imagery, his desire to expand and dilate his subject, connect him with the Elizabethans. He differs from them in that these qualities are controlled by a fine artistic instinct.

After the Restoration begins that age to which exuberant and metaphysical style was as hateful as impassioned and intense feeling. Prose, as well as poetry, was polished and chastened till it became the artistic expression of all that was proper and elegant and perspicuous in life and thought. A standard of propriety, borrowed from the French, taught to the English the hard lesson of artistic self-control, and the English mind never appeared to worse advantage than while trying to measure its thought and expression by the standard of propriety. But in its

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superficiality and conventionality, in the dangerous barrenness of deep motive and feeling which it attempted to inculcate, we see but the necessary reaction of growth against the Elizabethan life, which displayed all the coarseness and barbarity which is bred in the best natures by utter want of self-restraint. We regard the eighteenth century but as a necessary and painful time of training and probation in the school of self-criticism and of self-control. Self-control of all kinds was becoming so necessary, life grew continually more and more complex, its interests more complicated. The political struggle was not in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the comparatively crude one of the days of Elizabeth, when every man was either an enemy or a friend, when the external struggle was for national independence or national slavery, the internal one for freedom of conscience or subjection to Rome. Political and religious literature did not now mainly consist of pamphlets of invective against the opposing side. A vast system of alliances, counter-alliances, denoting connection with the various interests of different states, marked the complicated state of foreign policy. Political life at home was carried on by parties, and there were ministers who, like Halifax, had a mind large enough to understand and deal with conflicting interests. Philosophy came definitely into the realm of political and social life. The political speculations of Hobbes, Harrington, and Locke discredited opinions which could only recommend themselves by the strength of their invective. To succeed in such a life man must be many-sided in thought, self-controlled in expression and action.

As the oppressive yoke of Middle-Age ideas was removed by the Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, so that of the eighteenth century was cast off by the Renaissance at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the first Renaissance men had awoke to the sense of the glory and beauty of the individual life: in the second Renaissance awoke the enthusiasm for the collective life of mankind, a belief in the divinity and perfectibility of the human race, a care for its present, and a hope for its future. The idea of progress began to give shape and order to social thought and speculation, and to inspire art with hopefulness. To Godwin and Shelley its ideals were near and soon to be realised. In later thought and art, though it lives no less strongly and vividly, yet the hope it gives is restrained by the sense of slowly-working laws.

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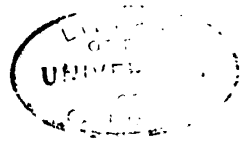
These two Renaissances, and the art which is the expression of their life, mark but phases in the "great world-struggle of developing thought." It may be that there are many yet to come, and that the soul of man will vibrate ever more and more strongly and harmoniously "to the larger sweep of the world's forces."



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